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ABSTRACT

This overview of the first year of the La Mancha Project consists of papers on various aspects of the 5-year project to improve the composition instruction in Vermont schools, incorporating workshop and individual student conference techniques, and integrating writing with other academic studies. The papers include discussions of (1) ninth grade progress at South Burlington High School, with appendices providing the Project outline for the school year, a selected bibliography of materials, and an introductory bibliography on dialects; (2) results of the Bergman Composition Adequacy Tests; (3) imaginative stimulation of student writing; (4) written communication and the study of history and of science; (5) film making; and (6) writing, English, and the mass media. A critical assessment of the Project with additional plans for the second year, a selected screen education bibliography, lists of directors and the 12 participating Vermont schools, and recommended readings from ninth-grade La Mancha students conclude the report. (See also TE 002 119.) (JMC)

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La Mancha – Plus One – 1969

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FRANK MANCHEL AND
VIRGINIA CLARK, *Editors*

TE 002 133

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT'S
SECOND ANNUAL
MODEL SECONDARY SCHOOL CONFERENCE

Burlington, Vermont **May 23-24, 1969**

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

by

SAMUEL N. BOGORAD
Department of English
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On behalf of the University, and more specifically, on behalf of the Department of English, the sponsor of the La Mancha Project, I am happy to welcome you to this conference. The opportunity I've had to read in advance the speeches prepared for the conference and to examine the reports in the Newsletter has made me aware of the broad spectrum of responses you have had to the first year of your La Mancha experience. "The Impossible Dream" is a stirring, even an inspiring, song; the impact of its theme is discernible in much of what you have said about the La Mancha Project. But I would caution you against allowing the potential symbolisms of the name of the project to expand into mere gimmickry. The idealism of the song is one thing; rational discrimination between illusion and delusion is another. The project has, in its first year, had predictable results: some things seem to have worked very well; some things have worked more or less effectively; some things have not worked at all. We can learn a lot from these results. We hope for better results in the next year. We shall not delude ourselves into believing that we can accomplish the impossible in one year, or two, or five.

Instead of an impossible dream, may I share a fearful nightmare with you? Your frequent references to "non-verbally-oriented students" — apparently they are numerous enough to constitute a recognizably significant bloc — frighten me into a vision of the future in which the educational process consists increasingly of showing films to students who can respond to the experience only by making films of their own. Their verbal armory will consist of bestial grunts. This is truly Project Apocalypse. Between it and La Mancha, Armageddon alone will decide the issue. Let us not forget the purpose of La Mancha. Its purpose is not easy acceptance of the non-verbally oriented student; its purpose is to re-orient such a student so that written communication does not become for him a lost and irretrievable skill.

The La Mancha Project is one outgrowth of our English Department's re-orientation vis-à-vis the secondary schools which began a number of years ago, when we decided to close our part of the nationwide gap that had grown between us and our responsibility for producing secondary school teachers of English and the gap between us and our need to be concerned about the secondary school curriculum. We began earlier than most academic English Departments in the country, and with the addition of Dr. Manchel to our staff we are effectively implementing productive relationships between you and the Department. This reconciliation between parties for so long alienated from each other will, I know, have fruitful results. At least it can now be said of the University of Vermont that for teachers of English in the state it is truly a responsible and responsive state university.

Again, I bid you welcome. Viva La Mancha! Viva La Manchel!

THE LA MANCHA PROJECT — THE FIRST YEAR

by

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The first year of the La Mancha project at South Burlington High School has been a rewarding one: as the year draws to a close, we have a group of Grade 9 students who are, in our opinion, writing better and enjoying it more than they would have done after a regular Grade 9 program. That this group is unanimous in its desire to stay together to be the pilot group for the Grade 10 program is the strongest accolade the students can give to their experiences. While the literature and vocabulary content of the traditional course has had to be curtailed considerably to accommodate the new program, it is our impression that some of the abilities and attitudes developed by the work in composition have carried over beneficially into the other areas so that the material associated with the Grade 9 program and the study skills pertinent to this age group have been satisfactorily covered.

The brief course outline and the list of materials used which are appended to this review of the project will give a factual summary of the work done this year. During the coming summer we will be involved in a review of the project plans and with a rewriting of the material so that when school opens in September, 1969, we shall have a fairly compact outline of the work for use with most of our Grade 9 classes. This will incorporate material from the social science and science areas as well as the English program. It is our intent to utilize the materials and the techniques which we have found effective in all our college-bound classes and as far as possible in the lower ability groups. We realize that one part of the project will need some modification, for the teachers of the groups next year will not have the time made available this year to the pilot class teacher for conferring with students. We shall have to plan for more in-class time for student conferences.

As we review the program carried out this year, we find that the most effective parts have been the workshop, or group, organization of the class and the conference concept. Less successful have been our efforts to integrate the social studies and science programs with the English work and our efforts to use the program with a low ability group.

A few details of these several aspects will give an insight into the success or failure in these areas. The pilot class of twenty-four college-bound students is a lively group who have adapted quickly to the workshop approach for writing and for evaluation of each other's efforts. The first grouping of the class was done arbitrarily — four students in a unit. As the year progressed, students changed groups voluntarily — often seeking special help from someone in another group whose reputation for ability in an area had become known. Sometimes the teacher suggested changes since he could see benefits for the student from membership in another group. Some students were skillful in writing concisely, while others were verbose; a session of working together often proved helpful to both. Some could get theme statements or topic sentences arranged almost intuitively, while others suffered torture in getting the paper oriented. Help was readily available from fellow students. Often the groups have been broken from four to three or even to two as students have found benefits from working more directly with each other. Papers have been submitted for group analysis with increasing readiness, even eagerness; and students have become receptive to criticism. From the first quick "This is fabulous!" or "This is awful!" the critical comments have moved into a "This would be better if you - - -" and "This is clear because you - - -" approach.

As the students have become better able to evaluate their own writing, they have reflected this developing skill in their approach to the literature used for class analysis. They have been able to appreciate the skill of the professional writer, for they have seen his craft in the light

of their own struggles to communicate with their readers.

During the first few weeks, the workshop technique, which was a new approach to classroom work for most of the students, may have produced some wasted time; however, there were always books at hand which the students were free to use, and many students quickly fell into the pattern of reading or browsing while waiting for the teacher to be free for conference and guidance. Gradually the material on hand to rewrite, to polish, to discuss built up into such volume that there was less time for reading and none to waste. The selection of material for the class paper, *The Harlequin,* and the details of getting the issues produced have consumed much time and given many experiences of value to the members of the class responsible for this work. The staff has been changed from time to time to provide as much shared responsibility as possible. Concentration and attention within the groups and within the newspaper staffs have been extremely good.

A second essential technique of the project is the conference method of working with the individual students. The teacher was given two periods a day for conferences and for planning, but naturally many of the students were not available during those two periods and their conferences had to be handled in class time or at other arranged moments. At first, conferences were long, possibly a full forty-five minute period. Later, as the work within the groups became more effective, the time could be definitely reduced, for students began to hand in better organized and more carefully proofread papers. Conference time has been spent in efforts to sharpen the focus of the papers, to build strong introductions and conclusions, to discuss ideas and logic, and to develop some sense of effective wording. In some cases half of the conference time has been spent on mechanics, the individualized work on problems of punctuation and grammar proving fairly effective. In addition to the discussion and evaluation of composition, the conference period has been utilized to guide the individual reading program which has run concurrently with the other work. The agreement has been that when writing assignments were done, the student was free to read; but there has been careful surveillance that the written work has reached a point where the student could do little more with this composition until he had some teacher guidance.

With the third facet of the program, the integration of writing with the science and social studies course, we have had less success than with the two areas just described. The problems innate in the traditional school schedule have prevented the pilot composition group from being homogeneous in the related courses. The cooperating teachers in science and social studies have worked valiantly and cooperated completely in trying to incorporate the La Mancha techniques into their classes and in coordinating assignments with the work being done in the project class. Yet, because the majority of the students in their classes were not grouped as La Mancha students, it was not possible to take full advantage of the plans originally devised to integrate major writing assignments. Though the frustrations of the cooperating teachers must have been many, they have remained firm supporters and understanding allies. The experiences of the three departments working cooperatively have been helpful in many ways even if we were not able to integrate efforts completely. We have found that the techniques of interviewing, of writing biographies, of research that were being used in the English class were easily adapted to the social studies and science programs. The conference techniques have been useful especially in the science area, and the writing of reviews and of research has been used constantly in the social studies classes. We can anticipate that, with the extension of the La Mancha techniques to most of Grade 9, more effective coordination of efforts will be possible. This will require careful organization and synchronization of plans in the three subject areas.

With the emphasis on composition, we had some concern about how much literature study could be incorporated into the freshman program. The over-all plans for the school call for a fairly thorough, formal introduction of the major literary genres; in addition, we have a unit on mythology and Greek literature and a unit on the Bible as literature which have become part of the Grade 9 curriculum. By adapting techniques to save time, the pilot class teacher has been able to cover almost all of the material of the traditional class. These literary units have been started in formal class sessions, and then the students, with carefully developed study guides, have been left to do much of the reading and evaluating on their own and in their groups. The groups have produced organized summaries, character studies, theme discussions, etc. There has been less daily quizzing and classroom discussion, but the final formal testing at the end of each unit has been kept. We had fully expected to find that students were going to be extremely critical of the marking procedures. It was a welcomed note to find that after

the first few sets of papers the group did not inquire about the grades that the papers might have received. By the end of the first month students were no longer concerned with grades as such, and we have received no questioning by parents as to the methods used to determine the grade. The system produced students who were not developing themes around "what the teacher wants" but, rather, involving themselves in their papers. The stigma of the grade presented no further problems during the year, and the evaluation given on the report cards was almost entirely a subjective one determined by the instructor.

As we evaluate what has occurred as a learning process in the pilot classroom, we find that the students have benefitted from the group or workshop technique and from the conference sessions. We think they are writing better, with a genuine interest in and concern for what they are doing. They have learned to organize themselves and their materials and to evaluate what they have done much more precisely than with the traditional techniques. We find that these critical abilities extend into their work with the writings of others — their peers and the professional writers. They have learned to take criticism, even to value it. While several things which would otherwise have been included in the program have had to be omitted or cut considerably, we will have to delay judgment as to how important these things are in relation to what has been gained.

The organization of the composition work for the year, based largely upon the sequence suggested by James Moffett, has been found to be generally acceptable — starting with autobiography and interview and moving to research, diction, dialogue, with a stop about mid-way for some formal class work on paragraph development. Our present conviction is that in our revision of plans we will place work on the paragraph earlier, for much time can be saved in conferences and in groups if some basic agreements have been reached earlier about how paragraphs and compositions are structured. From time to time a brief return to a formal treatment of certain aspects of punctuation is needed to keep the students aware of the need for careful work.

The use of video tape as an effective means of instruction has proved to be beneficial throughout the country, and the use of such equipment in the La Mancha classes confirms this finding. After shaky beginnings with many technical problems, the machine was put to effective use as a motivating agent. Various film clips from motion pictures, ETV special presentations on composition, news broadcasts, and speeches — all captured on video tape — provided the impetus needed to motivate students concerned with these areas. As a creative agent, the recording of the students' own television play grabbed their interest and made the necessary writing involved "fun" and not merely a classroom chore. The instructor has found the machine a valuable tool, for with the direct connection of the camera to the TV set, the need for reproducing student papers, with its sometimes prohibitive costs, was eliminated. As soon as the student paper was finished, it could be viewed by the entire class by photographing it with the TV camera. This system also eliminated much wasted time on the part of both the student and the instructor. The machine has provided many services which were not anticipated. Setting up shots for the student film without wasting valuable film is just one further example of the versatility of the device. In the future, we expect it to be a tool of communication among the La Mancha classes. Perhaps visitations will not be needed as we simply "swap" tapes of our classes.

The use of feature length movies in the classroom proved to be an extremely effective motivator. By having the students read the accompanying novel before seeing the film, we were able to combine these media into an effective study of characters, plot, theme, and film aesthetics. The films provided the motivation for writing analytical papers and film reviews, and for much lively discussion of the total effectiveness of the film. Specific scenes were shown several times to aid in the study of the various areas of film production. The analysis of these scenes proved to be important to the students' further work with filmmaking of their own. As a primary example, the viewing and analyzing of the final scenes of *Lonely Are the Brave* led directly to a critical look at the "cutting" of the students' film. Such analysis of major film productions has given the students a number of important criteria for the judging of films. It has also furnished them some important basic information concerning film aesthetics and should therefore improve the quality of or standards for evaluation of future films. As outlined in the lesson plans concerning the film production by the students, much writing was generated by the use of this media. From the writing of film scripts to the plotting of publicity for their own films, the unit stirred student interest and involvement. Many students have expressed an avid interest in making their own films during the coming summer. We will try to give as much direction as possible during this time, for we feel that this type of involvement will be important to their overall education and to their work in the

Grade 10 La Mancha curriculum. These films were not, however, presented without problems — scheduling of time so that the complete feature might be shown within the school day proved impossible, and the students were asked to view the film after school. The alternative of showing a reel a day for three days also presented problems. Booking arrangements for this extended period could present serious financial difficulties, and the taking of the better part of a week for each film did prove costly in terms of the curriculum requirements. It is hoped that these and similar problems may be dealt with effectively by providing an extended block of time for the English, history, and science classes. In this way any project which requires extended time allotments could occasionally use the class time of these three disciplines.

Staff meetings were held monthly. We found that much of what was planned during the summer months was not applicable when the classes were in actual operation. For this reason close liaison with social studies and science had to be maintained so that the plans in the English curriculum could be given as much follow-up in the other disciplines as possible. Although we experienced some internal difficulties in this area, we found that this system of teacher interaction was the only secure method of developing a program which might truly be called interdisciplinary. In the future, learning from the mistakes of this year, we will make a complete and detailed summary of meetings at the beginning of the year.

The free-reading program generated much student interest. It became obvious that students were reading more than they had ever done — and enjoying it. The classroom library was an instrumental factor in the success of this program. From a library of over 150 titles the students had complete freedom in their choice of reading material. With the library in the classroom itself, the instructor found it very easy to suggest specific titles for individuals during conference periods. Being able to pick up a book which the instructor felt beneficial for the individual and handing it to him to read proved to be a good motivator for increased reading. Picking up a copy of a book which had been mentioned during a class session and referring to it directly, noting that it was available for borrowing without "red tape," proved to involve students further in good titles. The success of the program has led us to the realization that budgeting for coming years must include funds for just such classroom libraries.

Visitations from participating schools presented a few difficulties. A combination of bad weather and changed schedules proved to be problems in providing class sessions which were helpful to the visitors. We found that a printed program of activities, mailed to the visitors before their arrival, proved helpful. Next year a system of student aids is planned to assist the visitor in his rounds. The fears that the visitors might affect the students' performance were not warranted, for the techniques of the workshop had become such a routine that the students often found it helpful to solicit the aid of the visiting team on some composition difficulty. In future visitations we will try to include a system of following one class throughout the day so that the follow-up lessons taught by the other disciplines may be viewed in correct perspective. As we revised our plans for the visitations, we included time for discussion among the La Mancha instructors. This proved to be very helpful to all involved.

Evaluation of the program is still subjective, for the results of the Bergman test and of the essay writing are not available to us at the time of writing this review. We have some questions about the validity of the Bergman test, for we found the mechanics of the test frustratingly ambiguous; students did not find the directions easy to follow; there was not adequate time for the teacher to explain directions clearly, and the test form did not seem to encourage the teacher to assist with directions. We feel that, while the test measured ingenuity and style, it did not measure logic or organization. We do not really feel comfortable about the self-correction feature of this test, especially as the same test is being readministered as the second evaluation. We are hopeful that other tests will be available for the evaluation of progress as the project continues. We look forward to having the report on the essay part of the evaluation.

Originally we had planned to carry the program in two classes, one a high college-bound level and the other a low general level. In spite of good intentions and honest effort, the program just has not worked with the low level group. We feel the failure was inherent in the nature of the group assigned to the pilot teacher rather than in the features of the program. With other groups at this level, it might have worked; however, these particular personalities lacked the self-discipline necessary for group work, and their writing level is below that which would adapt easily to the projects being attempted. We await with interest the effort of Champlain Valley Union High School to develop a plan for this type of class next year.

With one year's experience to build on, we expect next year to go more smoothly. The roles of those involved in the project have gradually become somewhat clearer, and we should be able to function more effectively. We can now conceive of the Grade 9 program as a year's pattern instead of bits and pieces, and we can see how the other areas of study can be fitted into the composition-centered program. We expect that the Grade 10 program will be well worked out by September so that efforts can be concentrated on putting the program into effect rather than upon developing and effecting it concurrently. The pilot group will be in its second year and should go forward quickly. There is assurance from the administration that the Grade 10 group can be scheduled for social studies as a unit; that will give greater opportunity to blend the disciplines than was possible this year. Our science program branches into biology and life science at the Grade 10 level, so there will be less opportunity to collaborate in that area, but we shall still have the cooperation of the science teachers.

Meantime the Grade 9 program will be adjusted to incorporate as much of La Mancha techniques into all classes as the time available and the inclinations of the teachers permit. We shall be doing some inservice work with the freshmen teachers to help orient them to the program, and we shall look to the pilot project teacher of this year for direction. In general, then, the program has worked well and has produced gratifying results in student interest and improved writing ability, in so far as subjective evaluation can determine. We approach the second step with courage and with hope for the realization of more "impossible dreams."

Appendix I

The La Mancha Project has utilized the following generalized outline for the composition work for this year. The sequential development shown will be revamped during the summer rewriting process to provide for a more effective sequence.

Month	*Composition Areas Developed*
Sept.-Oct.	Autobiography developing into biography with emphasis on lead sentence. Lead structure developed with the Murray system. Initial work with various types of paragraph development.
Nov.-Dec.	Interview techniques with emphasis on the use of transition words and phrases. Writing for effectiveness and reader involvement stressed.
Jan.	Research techniques using comparative topics and standard MLA documentation. Follow up lessons on interview — with appropriate documentation for research paper.
Feb.	Paragraph techniques with various methods of development noted and used. Lead structure emphasized again with concentration on creative writing.
Mar.	Dialects with associated work on the functional varieties of language. This area developed by various writing and research assignments.
Apr.	Dialogue with associated work on television, radio, and film uses. Complete film script written by each student. Work on publicity and allied propaganda.
May-June	Review — the complete course placed in context and further work done on paragraph development.

These areas were constantly supplemented with various other writing assignments. Single period "deadline papers" were used extensively to amplify and provide practical experience for the skills taught. Other writing experiences included newspaper articles; letter writing to project schools; critical reviews of films, television, plays and novels; lyrics written for songs composed by students; directions to explain a process; comparative papers; character analysis; various topics as assigned by students themselves in the individual groups; propaganda in the form of written TV commercials and speeches; and various creative papers. The preceding list does not take into account the various follow-up assignments given in the history and science sections.

Appendix II

Selected Bibliography of Materials

Student Texts:

Ainsworth, Norma, ed. *The Gift of Christmas*. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1965.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1965.

Dunning, Stephen, ed. *Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle*. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1966.

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954.

Hermans, Mabel. *Stories from the Old Testament*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1967.

Keyes, Daniel. *Flowers for Algernon*. New York: Bantam Paperbacks, 1967.

Rouse, W. H. D., trans. *The Odyssey*. New York: New American Library, 1937.

Warriner, John. *Advanced Composition*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961.

Works, Austin. *A Vocabulary Builder (Book Three)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Educators Publishing Service, 1967.

Instructor's Texts:

Ackerman, James S. *On Teaching the Bible as Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, English Curriculum Study Series, 1967.

Benedict, Stewart (editor). *Famous American Speeches*. New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1965.

Bulfinch, Thomas. *Mythology*. New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1959.

Chase, Stuart. *The Tyranny of Words*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1938.

Desser, Maxwell. *Using the Library*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board Publications, 1967.

Ford, Nick Aaron. *Language in Uniform*. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1967.

Frey, Leonard. *Readings in Early English Language History*. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1966.

Gibson, Walker. *The "Speaking Voice" and the Teaching of Composition*. Princeton: Commission on English, College Entrance Examination Board, 1965.

Gordon, Edward J. *Writing and Literature in the Secondary School*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966.

Harrison, G. B. *The Bible for Students of Literature and Art*. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1964.

Kuhns, William, and Stanley, Robert. *Teaching Program: Exploring the Film*. New York: George Pflaum, Publishers, Inc., 1968.

Leavitt, Hart Day. *The Writer's Eye*. New York: Bantam Paperbacks, 1968.

—and Sohn, David. *Stop, Look, and Write!* New York: Bantam Paperbacks, 1968.

MacGowan, Kenneth. *Behind the Screen*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1965.

Manchel, Frank. *Movies and How They Are Made*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.

Moffett, James T. *Teaching a Universe of Discourse*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968.

Murray, Donald. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968.

Postman, Neil. *Television and the Teaching of English*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1961.

Reed, Carroll. *Dialects of American English*. New York: World Publishing Company, 1967.

Rhodin, Eric. *Newspapermen: An Introduction to Journalism*. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1967.

Roberts, Edgar. *Writing Themes About Literature*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

Audio-Visual Materials

Motion Pictures:

Nov. *The Thief of Bagdad*
Dec. *On the Waterfront*
Jan. *The Sea Hawk*
Feb. *The Plainsmen*
Mar. *Lonely Are The Brave*
Apr. *Fort Apache*
May *Intruder In The Dust*
June *Rebel Without A Cause*

Recordings:

1. *The Crown of Creation,* Jefferson Airplane, RCA.
2. *Bookends,* Simon and Garfunkle, Columbia.
3. *Bless Its Pointed Little Head,* Jefferson Airplane, RCA.
4. *Our Changing Language,* McGraw-Hill Book Co. (23843)
5. *Americans Speaking,* NCTE.
6. *The Sounds of Chaucer's English.* NCTE.
7. *Woman, Woman,* The Union Gap, Columbia.
8. *The Bitter and the Sweet,* Glenn Yarbrough, RCA.
9. *Wonderfulness,* Bill Cosby, Warner Bros.
10. *Wings It,* Jonathan Winters, Columbia.
11. *Here's Jonathan Winters,* Jonathan Winters, Verve.

Mechanical Devices Utilized:

1. Video Tape Recording (Ampex VR 5000)
2. Overhead Projector
3. 8 Track Stereo Tape Player
4. Standard Record Player
5. 16mm and Super 8mm projectors
6. Super 8mm Camera (Kodak Instamatic)
7. Full Track Tape Recorder
8. Cassette Tape Recorder
9. Contemporary Composition Kit (Science Research Association)
10. Radio transcriptions "The Shadow," Puck the Comic Weekly," "Gangbusters," etc.

Appendix III

DIALECTS: AN INTRODUCTORY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, Harold B., ed. *Readings in Applied English Linguistics,* 2d ed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964. (Part III: Linguistic Geography.)

Evertts, Eldonna L., ed. *Dimensions of Dialect*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967. (A collection of thirteen articles on both geographical and social dialects, many of which were first published in *Elementary English*.)

Francis, W. Nelson. *The Structure of American English*. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958. (Chapter 9, "The Dialects of American English," by Raven I. McDavid, Jr.)

Malmstrom, Jean. *Dialects — U.S.A*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963. (Based on Raven I. McDavid's "The Dialects of American English in *The Structure of American English* by W. Nelson Francis, but designed for secondary school use; contains many practical suggestions for classroom application.)

—*Language in Society*. New York: Hayden Book Company, Inc., 1965.

McDavid, Raven I., Jr., and Green, Donald C. *Workbook for The Structure of American English* by W. Nelson Francis. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1966. (Contains many examples of questions from the Linguistic Atlas questionnaire.)
Reed, Carroll E. *Dialects of American English.* New York: The World Publishing Company, 1967.
Shuy, Roger W. *Discovering American Dialects.* Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967. (An updating of Malmstrom, 1963.)

Many of the books listed above contain bibliographies that will suggest additional reading.

Every teacher who works with dialects should have first-hand knowledge of the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* and of the companion work by Hans Kurath, *Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England.* Both are in the Reference Room of the UVM Library.

Two very helpful records are *Americans Speaking* (NCTE) and *Our Changing Language* (McGraw-Hill).

A great deal of material concerning dialects, both geographical and social, is published in professional journals like *American Speech;* the May 1968 issue of *Elementary English,* for example, contains "Dialect Research and the Needs of Schools," "Variations in Standard American English," "Detroit Speech: Careless, Awkward, and Inconsistent, or Systematic, Graceful, and Regular?," "Some Aspects of the Impact of Linguistics on Language Teaching in Disadvantaged Communities," "The Bilingual Situation in Canada," and "Teaching Children Who Speak Social Class Dialects."

— compiled by Dr. Virginia Clark,
Department of English, UVM

BERGMAN'S COMPOSITION ADEQUACY PROFILE

by

DAVID HOWELL

Department of Psychology

University of Vermont

My paper this afternoon will deal with two aspects of the results obtained using Bergman's test. I will first deal with the data we obtained, and will then discuss prospects for the use of the test in the future.

The Bergman test was initially administered in the fall of 1968 to a large number of ninth grade students throughout the state. This spring the same test was readministered to the same students under the same testing conditions. For those of you who are not familiar with the test, it can be described rather quickly. On the first day the student was asked to write six short writing samples on preselected topics. The next day, the student was given a question book, and asked to fill out a multiple choice questionnaire dealing with the six writing samples. After the student had filled out the questionnaire, the teacher was to read him the correct answers and the student was to mark all wrong items and record the number wrong on his answer sheet.

In the middle of April, several of us met to go over the data which had been collected. Our intent was to attempt to assess, through the results of the Bergman test, the success of the La Mancha project. Unfortunately, when we received the materials, we found that we were unable to deal with all, or even most, of them. There were several reasons for our difficulty. First of all, most of the answer sheets had no indication as to whether the student was in the La Mancha group or a control group. In addition, some of the papers had been graded and some had not. Of those which had been graded, some showed the number wrong, some showed the number right, and some had no indication of the number right or wrong. What was even more disturbing was that while many papers carried the number wrong and the number right, these two figures added to fifty *plus or minus five*. On a fifty item questionnaire, it is obviously impossible for a student to have 30 questions wrong and 24 questions right, and yet this occurred with surprising regularity. Obviously, the teachers had made no attempt to check on the accuracy of the scoring, and, equally obviously, ninth grade students cannot count, let alone add or subtract.

In all fairness, I should point out that there were schools who took their responsibility seriously, and I wish to thank you. One of the schools was the model school in South Burlington, and it was decided to focus on the data from this school, since it was the most relevant for our purposes. What follows is a discussion of what was revealed on close examination of these data.

One of the first questions which was asked concerned the comparability of the two groups — the La Mancha group and the control group. To answer this question, I compared the September scores of 33 students in the control group with the September scores of 61 students in the La Mancha group. These figures represent the number of students remaining after voiding papers for those students who did not complete all 50 questions on the questionnaire. As had been expected, there was no difference between the two groups in terms of the number of errors. The Control group had a mean of 29.91 errors, while the experimental group had a mean of 31.31 errors. A Wilcoxon test for independent samples showed this difference to be insignificant ($z = -1.196$).

Given that the two groups began at the same level, it is reasonable to ask if one group improved more than the other over the course of the year. Here again there was no difference. The control group had a mean improvement of 2.15 points, while the La Mancha group improved by 1.00 points. This difference was tested by a Wilcoxon test for independent samples and was not significant ($z = .970$).

The fact that there was no difference in the amount of improvement prompted me to ask if there was in fact any improvement over the year. Here again the answer was negative. A Wilcoxon test for matched samples showed the degree of improvement to be nonsignificant for both the control group ($z = -1.91$) and for the experimental group ($z = -1.346$).

The above findings can be summarized very briefly by saying that the two groups began the year together, showed little or no improvement, and finished the year together.

For the proponents of the La Mancha project, these results may seem rather discouraging. However, there are two possible interpretations. One explanation is that the La Mancha project was not successful, at least in the first year. The second possibility, and the one I happen to prefer, is that the Bergman test was not testing what we wanted it to test.

There are several reasons why I am inclined toward the latter view. After examining the error data in detail, I spent a great deal of time reading the writing samples and examining the multiple choice answers. The first thing I noticed was that the students were making a great many errors, at least as judged against Bergman's scoring key. The average number of errors was approximately thirty, which is only seven and one-half fewer errors than would be expected if the answer sheets had been filled out at random.

As a result of the above finding, I proceeded to examine the accuracy of the students' responses on the answer sheet. It soon became apparent that the students appeared unable to understand the questions. In many instances an answer sheet would contain answers which seemed to bear no relationship to what the student had actually written. Whether this lack of relationship should be attributed to carelessness or to inadequate comprehension of what was being asked is impossible to tell.

I next began reading the writing samples themselves, and compared my subjective estimate of the quality of the sample with the score on Bergman's test. I was unable to see any consistent relationship. As an example, I would like to read excerpts from two papers chosen more or less randomly. In my opinion, there is a world of difference between the two papers, and yet there is no differentiation in terms of error. Both of these papers (score — 34) are from the same group at the same school with the same teacher.

Assignment A

There the pour helpless leaf is struggling to stay on the branch. In the view was the dark gray clouds and the branches swaying in the wind. The wind is starting to pick up again and the leaf is off the branch in a second. It fluttered and flictered in the wind and finally hit the ground. The leaf was blown around on the ground with the other leaves for a half an hour. Then it got caught in a steam a flowed to a drain. At first it got caught on the wet, muddy drain and then . . . It was gone.

Assignment D

It was as if it happened in a split second. He looked around and couldn't find me. The baby didn't feel bad at first. The reason for that is because he was having fun and didn't need his father then. It started to get late and the child desided that he had better find his father. When the child looked for a while and couldn't find him, he started to cry. He cried and cried because he was lonesome and not one person going by would offer to help him. It started to get cold and he was still crying and still no one would help him.

Assignment A

The leaf falling looks like a fallon tree. It beautiful color are like a little rain bow, after a rain strom. In the fall you see many colorful leaves fallen down. The sky seem to turn many pretty colors. All the leaves fallen make the rainbow bigger, then just one.

The leaves on a mountain, makes a very pretty sight. It fun to count the many different color a leaf.

Assignment D

A little boy is lost in the park in can't find his mommy. He began to cry. Everywhere you look, you can see a little boy with a long face. He seem so lonely, so you going as him what seem to wrong. "I lost my mommy."

"Would you like me to help you find her," I said.

He said, "Oh please help me because I can not her."

After a long time walking around and around we find his mommy. He then stops his crying, and run to his mommy in joyance way. Your thank the mommy and the little boy.

On the basis of the preceding discussion, I would recommend that we not use the Bergman test in the future. Since, for the most part, the papers were not returned this year in a usable form, I suspect that the same would hold another year. In addition, I do not feel that the test is suitable for our purposes. Whether this is due to carelessness on the part of the students, real difficulty comprehending the directions, or some inadequacy of the test itself, is a question I am not able to answer. I suspect that the major blame, but certainly not all, attaches to the last alternative.

OF THE LA MANCHA READING SAMPLES, 1968-1969

by

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I am sorely tempted to move that my report be received — not even necessarily accepted — and that we proceed to other business. The temptation arises not because the statistics I present are embarrassing to the La Mancha Project (quite the reverse is true), but because such favorable statistics must appear rigged. If they are in any sense unreliable, these findings are unreliable because of my inexperience and not because of wily manipulation. My open face is my bond; my naiveté, which I feel confident will emerge as we proceed, is the guarantee of my innocence, which I offer to you as no small part of this package deal.

Let me first explain something of the procedure we followed, for the benefit of those not directly involved, in the reading of the papers. On April 19, representatives of 7 of the 10 participating schools met with me for the fun and games of reading papers and munching pizzas (catered by the Project's worthy director and transported in his shiny maroon delivery truck). Our effort was bent to the evaluation of student 20-minute essays, written in the fall and in the spring on one of the topics in a three-choice set used in both fall and spring — and scored by us on a 4-point scale. My instructions to the readers included these brief suggestions and rough definitions:

A. Read each paper for a total impression, ignoring insofar as possible occasional misspellings, omissions of words, and similar shortcomings.

B. Do not think precisely of how you would *grade* the paper, if the student were a member of one of your own classes. We are interested in a professional job of *scoring* according to a uniform standard.

C. On a 4-point scale, as indicated below, decide first of all whether a given paper is an upper-half or a lower-half performance; then make a simple refinement of that grade. A 5-point scale is not being used; you will have no convenient fence-straddling grade of "middle 3."

4 = Lively, interesting, sharp in detail
3 = Some spark and verve; some detail
2 = Generally "correct," but thin and ineffective
1 = A mess; probably also very brief without being succinct.

We read and scored several dittoed samples before we embarked on the reading of "live" papers.

No reader read papers from his or her own school, of course, but each set of fall or spring papers from a given class within a particular school was read by just one reader. Ideally, the papers would be read more than once, and ideally the papers would be scrambled. But we had just one day for the reading, and I spared myself the subsequent task of unscrambling and restoring papers to their original folders for return to the schools.

On April 21, Dr. Manchel, his intern teachers, and a representative of a school who was unable to read with us on Saturday dealt with remaining folders, again after a briefing by me. I now submit to you the results of the reading. I would be very pleased to receive from you suggestions for further meaningful breakdowns in these statistics (see table on the facing page).

Explanations:

Of the 10 schools involved in the Project this year, one submitted no papers; one submitted only spring samples, with no fall papers to measure performance against; one had only a La Mancha class and no control group during the year; and two had as "control" groups classes composed of students so obviously inferior in verbal ability as to be meaningless for our purposes. The sets from those two were read, but the preponderance of 1 scores and the rare exceptions of 2 scores, with nothing higher, dictated my excluding those results from my tabulations. The schools' reasons for having their students write on the suggested topics I do not question, but I see no purpose in the papers' being submitted to us and certainly no justification for regarding these classes as control groups.

I have placed quotation marks around the word "control" on the table simply because the groups

La Mancha Groups	*Up*	*Down*	*Same*	*3 or 4 Fall*	*3 or 4 Spring*
School #1	22	3	14	4	11
School #2	6	3	15	10	13
School #3	13	4	5	6	14
School #4	2	4	11	10	7
School #5	8	2	10	5	12
School #6	8	7	7	8	9
School #7	8	8	5	10	9
School #8	16	1	8	11	23
TOTALS	83	32	75	64	98
GRAND TOTAL			190		
% OF TOTAL				33.7%	51.6%
"Control" Groups					
School #1	6	11	10	4	6
School #2	3	5	9	2	2
School #3	13	3	11	7	18
School #4	4	8	8	6	6
Also School #4	4	4	15	4	2
Also School #5	13	6	12	3	4
TOTALS	43	37	65	26	38
GRAND TOTAL			145		
% OF TOTAL				17.9%	26.2%

were variously named by the schools themselves and because the measure of control is, it seems to me, open to some question. Because I know some of the family names encountered on the class lists for school #3 (not, I hasten to add, the school in whose district I reside), I call your particular attention to the figures for that school under both the La Mancha and the Control headings. Certainly this must be a true Control group. Others may be as well.

Conclusions:

The evidence before us would seem to offer proof of the effectiveness of the La Mancha approach, since in both the first and the fifth columns the La Mancha students have shown the improvement and the attainment of a level of competence which we seek. The statistics, then, are reassuring by any standard of initial response. Still, self-satisfaction, always dangerous, must be tempered by a few very important considerations:

A. Since on April 19 the fall papers from a given school were read by one reader and the spring papers by *another* reader, the improvement where it occurs may be the product of the "spring" reader's being more lenient than the "fall" reader. Such a discrepancy should work both ways, of course, and for Control as well as La Mancha groups, and therefore should level out. Since our members are relatively small, however, some skewing to the advantage of the desired (and achieved) results must be recognized as a possibility.

   On April 21, in most instances a *single* reader scored *both* fall and spring papers written by a particular class in a particular school.

B. We must ask ourselves how firm a check on La Mancha results we have in the Control groups as constituted. Did scheduling of other courses, for example, necessitate your keeping together as a La Mancha unit your very best freshmen, with the predictable result that those most able students would inevitably improve, as a group, so long as the instruction was not so poor as to actually do violence to the students' natural tendency to grow?

On the other hand,

A. The La Mancha groups were at some disadvantage if they are indeed composed of the most able students in the freshman class, for the student who scores a 4 on his fall writing sample can only hold steady or go down with his spring score.

B. The "spring" reader might have been less rather than more lenient than the "fall" reader, although again, of course, such an effect on the total results should be nullified on balance.

In conclusion, the results seem to me encouraging. At the very least, they are not discouraging. Let us remember always that we have before us but a single evaluation of each piece of writing,

and that any student might have had an off day when composing either of his papers. He might also have had the good fortune of catching one reader's fancy in some idiosyncratic fashion. I would argue, though, that although an able student may stumble or fall on a given day, it is unlikely that a weak student will impress beyond his true capabilities. English teachers are not noted for their kindly tolerance toward *other* people's students, however many allowances they may make for their own.

Recommendations:

Having offered perhaps enough caveats with respect to the interpretation to be placed on this year's findings, let me, finally, make a few recommendations for the future:

A. Students should be given a *new* set of topics on which to write in the spring. Many teachers reported that their students groaned upon being confronted in the spring with the same (by then, at least) tired old topics given them in the fall. My impression is that the wise student is the student who wrote on one of the three topics in the fall and then chose a second of the three in the spring (as did my own son, I proudly report). Such a course of action removed all temptation to recall what one had written previously and therefore contributed to spontaneity.

B. Teachers (preferably La Mancha teachers) should be called together for a *fall* reading of fall papers, as a part of the process of discovering what is valued and what is to be emphasized in student writing. Such a plan is especially desirable in view of the amount of turnover which I know is to occur in teaching assignments. Continuity is important if not vital to this Project; we should therefore make every effort to initiate a teacher into as many aspects of the Project as possible, and as soon as possible. Then in the spring, a second reading — this of spring papers only — should be held.

C. In connection with recommendation B, a reader of fall papers should read the spring papers written by the *same* students whose fall papers she read. The reader would have no recollection of individual fall performance by springtime, for her memory would be dulled and her sanity assaulted by much paper reading in the interim. The only obvious disadvantage of this scheme is that the reader knows that we hope to see high and higher scores achieved in the spring.

D. As the Project moves into its second year and its second phase, the record of each student's performance should be kept for each and all of his years in high school, since a one-year period is both very short and very problematical to serve as a basis for measuring the individual's progress and the Project's success.

E. After the fall reading, teachers may wish to let their students (and this should be done for *both* La Mancha *and* Control groups) know what the assembled readers regarded good writing to be. To the objection that sophistication with regard to a type of test is no substitute for genuine learning I would counter that this is not really a type of test. Students are likely to "give" us what they think we "want to hear" on an assigned topic. If we can demonstrate to them our preference for honest and affecting writing, we may succeed in encouraging them to write better and also succeed in some modest way in closing the generation gap.

I know of one reader who went back to his classroom after our April reading, gave his students our rough definitions of the 4-point scale, and had them evaluate writing by their classmates on that basis. The students, I understand, enjoyed calling a mess a mess and also profited from being let in on the inner workings of a not after all very mysterious process.

I wish to express my special thanks to this year's readers and again to invite suggestions for improvement.

R. S. V. P.

by

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I come today with no theories of rhetoric, no formulas for certain success in composition instruction. I do not bring the usual reassurance that student writing can be substantially improved even given enough time to consider what students produce, the proper working atmosphere, lay readers, and electronic aids. I am not convinced that significant and lasting improvement is at all possible in the kind of picture, TV, film, talking, digest, instant world in which we live. Indeed, arguments could be marshalled suggesting that even if the miracle of universal writing fluency and coherence were to materialize, it would be, in the context of the media revolution and the actual writing needs of students, a futile exercise. But "La Mancha" is the name of our conference, and the vigorous exercise of futility and expectation of the miraculous are the orders of the day.

Let this year's Quixote, then, prepare to skirmish with the windmills, digging rusty spurs into the boney flanks of a tired Rozinante, and keeping before his eyes the image of that unattainable ideal, the pure and lovely lady, Dulcinea del Toboso. To acknowledge that the damsel was, in truth, a common whore, unworthy of chivalric obeisance, would, of course, spoil the game. Let us then maintain the fiction that the ideal does exist and that it can be attained through the doing of good works.

Those of you who heard me talk about the literature program (Burlington, 1967), or about the English curriculum (Burlington, 1968), will surely be able to anticipate my position vis à vis composition (Burlington, 1969). Reading literature, I had said, should be the occasion for pleasurable exploration and illumination of what is important to human beings. Writing, I would now say, should be the occasion for formulating a response to those internal and external happenings important to the writer, so that he may, in Donald Murray's words, "transplant it into the minds of people beyond the range of his voice."[1] His act of writing must be the most logical and appropriate means of responding to the hurly-burly of things, people, and events which come to lie on his communicative threshold.

Indeed, one prime purpose of the English program is to provide entrée into things, people, and events — into "the way things are," into ideas and issues that are important or potentially important to the students in our classrooms. We look to literature for such humanistic enlightenment; we acknowledge the contributions of the popular media — film, television, newspapers, and magazines — to making students aware of what is swirling around them in this mad world of ours, and where in it they may possibly fit. The teacher too contributes his knowledge and insights to help develop this sense of how things are.

All of these reading, viewing, listening, finding-out activities provide not only humanizing encounters and the occasions for learning certain skills, but they also provide a reservoir of potential commentary. Having thus engaged the student's attention (he may be furious, intrigued, bitter, curious, disillusioned, ambivalent, or ecstatic), provision for some disciplined response is made. Such response may be expressed as opposition, support, satire, irony, parallels, corollaries, implications, or extensions of the issue at hand. I am not suggesting such a clear-cut division of processes is obvious in the working classroom. Nevertheless, most teachers would probably agree to the stimulus-response pattern of much of what we do in our classes.

The student's first response may be gesture. He may shake his head, smile, gasp in horror, sneer, guffaw, wretch, or wrinkle a brow. His next response, ordinarily, is talk — informally to his friends and to the teacher in class discussion, as a member of a smaller group in panel discussions, individually to the teacher, or during the ubiquitous three-minute talk.

All of these stimulus — response activities are, for students, extensions of the normal communicative behavior of people. As teachers we have little trouble initiating and sustaining speech activities. Listening, given reasonable talk and opportunities to respond, presents relatively little difficulty. Certainly our students do much active speaking and listening, mouths and ears pressed

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[1] Donald M. Murray, *A Writer Teaches Writing* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 1.

to telephone hot-lines. Decoding print (it used to be calling reading) still is regarded as a fairly utilitarian activity. Most students acknowledge its importance and do it as a matter of course in their normal, that is to say, their out-of-school lives. They may read trashy fiction or the most prosaic exposition, but these lurid tales, rock and roll magazines, record labels, menus, advertisements, and street signs testify to acceptance of reading as a normal mode of receiving information and experiencing pleasure — McLuhan notwithstanding.

At this point, writing is traditionally included as an appropriate language art which permits a special kind of ordered and recorded response. Writing, however, is really a special case in today's schools. It cannot pass the test of sane and normal activity carried on by the population at large. These days it is an activity practiced almost exclusively in classrooms or by professionals. Because it is performed upon command of the teacher, to whom its message is usually directed, and because the message is rarely seen by its most logical audience, writing has little communicative potency for students. Writing is, for most of them, an exotic penitential ritual, endured only to achieve the long-sought diplomaed salvation.

I have no sentimental attachment to writing. The McLuhanists could be right when they proclaim writing an antiquarian activity completely out of tune with "the way it is." It could be too that English teacher-training programs should be turning out media managers rather than teachers of literature and composition. If this is true, if writing is being perpetuated as ritual activity better suited to museum than to classroom, let us abandon it and find some other means of coherent response to the confusions about us. What shall it be? Film-making? Psychodrama? Sensitivity training? The Living Theater? Found poetry? Computer programmed discourse?

Stephen Dunning too suggests that the near future will find utilitarian writing gone.[2] Computers will pre-empt conventional business correspondence. Multiple choice tests checked by mechanical readers will soon displace essays. Social correspondence is already giving way to the telephone (anywhere in the United States for one dollar). Witness the current telephone advertising on television, scoffing at the slow and impersonal letter. Visi-phones, permitting long distance face-to-face communication, already being installed in selected areas, will certainly decide the issue.

Why writing then? It is difficult to defend writing for writing's own sake. Writing can be justified as it demonstrates its indispensability to students engaged in the larger processes of stimulus and response to what they see, or come to see, as important. Only as it serves the larger humanizing function of the English program can we lavish the time and energy on shaping the written word. If it fails to serve the humanizing function, it should not be permitted to steal precious hours from our real work of moving minds.

In the novel *Herzog,* Saul Bellow has unwittingly planted the seeds of a model humanities-based writing program. It is almost a pity that Mr. Bellow does not teach a composition course in a high school, because he would know just how to get his students to write. He would do it just as he gets the almost Everyman, Moses Herzog, to write. The very anti-hero of the novel *Herzog* experiences several parallel threats to his sanity. His second marriage has just foundered under particularly ugly circumstances. An important friendship has evaporated in a miasma of intrigue and betrayal. Simultaneous with the crumbling of his personal relationships is his failure to arrive at some intellectual synthesis, some reconciliation of the myriad of theories and phenomena at play in the universe, Herzog teeters at the edge of mental breakdown.

Caught then between the disintegration of his personal life and a universe which becomes more incomprehensible as one learns more about it, Herzog writes. He writes:

> ". . . songs, psalms, and utterances, putting into words, what he had often thought, but for the sake of form or something of the sort had always suppressed."[3]
>
> ". . . he wrote endlessly fanatically to the newspapers, to people in public life, to friends, and relatives, at last to the dead, his own obscure dead, and finally the famous dead."[4]

He writes to everyone from the bank robber, Willie Sutton, and the credit manager of Marshall Field's store in Chicago to Spinoza and God. He writes to Fred Hoyle, the physicist, to a college professor, to Teilard de Chardin, the theologian, to General Eisenhower, to Adlai Stevenson, to an oil engineer, a police commissioner, a Hindu mystic, the U. S. Public Health Service, *The New York Times,* to his cousin, aunt, and son, and of course, to himself. His letter to his mother begins,

[2] Stephen Dunning, "Some Pragmatics of Composition," *Reflections on High School English,* ed. Gary Tate (Tulsa: The University of Tulsa, 1966), p. 56.

[3] Saul Bellow, *Herzog* (New York: The Viking Press, 1964), p. 327.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 1.

"As to why I haven't visited your grave in so long . . .".[5] To a Public Health Service official who has appeared on television his opening sentence is "I saw you on television making a damn fool of yourself . . . [and] . . . I feel free to tell you what I think of your philosophy."[6] To a Panama City civic official: "The size and number of rats in Panama City when I passed through truly astonished me."[7] Some of the letters are short, running five or six sentences. Most are rather long, some running several pages.

It soon becomes apparent that his writing is both symptom and therapy for his imminent emotional collapse. It is symptom because, as you have probably guessed, Herzog writes, but almost all of his letters go unmailed. He very rarely reaches his intended audience. In a certain sense, however, Saul Bellow delivers Herzog's mail to the audience of readers of the novel. Herzog's letters can be read by those addressed who are still alive and can read English. (I don't know if God reads novels in His spare time. I hope He does.)

The therapy for Herzog (and for Bellow, who is, I believe, plagued by the same demons) lies in Herzog-Bellow's use of the epistolary editorial to give shape to and to purge all of those things that intrigue him, that puzzle him, that enrage him, that move him. For Herzog and Bellow, writing is the most appropriate means of contending with a threatening, demeaning, and ultimately incomprehensible world, where only occasional revelations and joys are possible.

How does all of this bear on the place of writing in the English classroom and on how writing can be made a logical communicative activity for students? In a sense, we are all Herzogs trying to find ourselves in an increasingly confusing world. We are looking for a "synthesis" (Herzog's favorite word), some more deliberately and skillfully than others. We are all trying to reconcile an overwhelming number of competing explanations for what it means to be alive, explanations that are psychological, scientific, economic, humanistic, pragmatic, idealistic, religious. Our students too are trying to make sense out of their world, some unconsciously, an increasing number very consciously and deliberately. They are, however, receiving very little help from us, as they cast about.

It has been said that adolescence is the time of socially acceptable neurosis. To be adolescent is, in a sense, to be neurotic, if by neurotic we mean to respond disproportionately to what is, or to be consistently inconsistent, or to be preoccupied with inner storms. Addressing the slings and arrows would constitute therapy, in the sense of Herzog's therapy, but we would want to avoid Herzog's neurotic symptomology of writing to the mind's image of the audience rather than to the audience itself.

Our slogan then must become "Every student a Herzog" (not a very stirring slogan, I admit). In Donald Murray's terms our instructional task is to help the student find and explore his subjects which are important to him, subjects to which he wants to respond. My emphasis would be on the exploration of subject, using all appropriate media for stimulation and response, rather than on the one medium, writing, and that one a candidate for obsolescence. Our only hope for writing is to make it a logical and needed act for students caught up in the frustrations and injustices, the possibilities and gratifications which are their world.

Literature helps to locate subjects, as do newspapers, magazines, films, and television, as do public figures and nagging teachers. Once found and enlarged through discussion and perhaps further reading, viewing, and listening, writing may be possible. Let them write their epistolary editorials to their parents, to their friends, to their enemies, to their neighbors, to the principal, to the town council, to the mayor, to the governor, to the President, to the Pope, to the TV station, to the newspaper, to the Beatles, to Donovan and Aretha Franklin, to Nuyen Cao Ky, and Mao Tse-Tung, to Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, to General Hershey, to James Earl Ray, and Sirhan Sirhan, to Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver, to the dead John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, to Julius Caesar, to Socrates, to Oedipus, to Silas Marner (he'd love to receive some mail), to The Ancient Mariner, to Willy Loman, to Holden Caulfield, to Satan, and to God — and to anyone else, in fact or in fiction, living or dead, or not yet born.

Having found subject and audience, let them inquire and inform, analyze and compare, attack and defend, complain and rail, sneer and deride, worship and adore. And the teacher must deliver the mail, and, whenever possible, wait for a reply. The mail must be delivered, because delivery rescues writing from being the irrelevant act it now seems to most students.

Yes, I can hear your questions. How does one deliver correspondence to Silas Marner or to Oedipus, or to God — not to mention waiting for

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 318.

a response? And even if we knew their addresses, wouldn't the postage be prohibitive?

Obviously, letters can be written and mailed to real people, organizations, corporate entities — the mayor, the TV station, Dow Chemical, and so on. A student or group of students writing a single letter to such an addressee could reasonably expect some sort of response. Very busy public personalities, however, are not likely to take time to respond to the polemics of high school students. Nor will Silas Marner, Oedipus, or God turn out to be anything but very delinquent correspondents.

Correspondents must be found who will give response to the queries and challenges posed by the writer. Here is the opportunity to vary another usually fixed element in the communicative act. Not only should we vary the audience to whom we write, but we should vary the voice or the persona of the writer. Students should be prepared to respond to a classmate's epistolary editorial by assuming the persona of the addressee. Each member of a class pursuing a study of violence, for instance, would write a letter — editorial. One student might address Martin Luther King. Another student would write to Oedipus, another to God, and so on. The ordinarily undeliverable letters would be randomly or perhaps deliberately assigned to members of the class — or perhaps delivered to students in another class. Each recipient would be responsible for writing a reasoned reply in the voice of King or Oedipus or God. Adopting the role of another personality calls not only for knowledge of his particular or possible position, but of the time and texture of his discourse.

Some honest and vigorous writing would surely come of such issue-centered composition directed at and delivered to other-than-teacher audiences, with the expectation by the writer of real or simulated response.

The story is told of the almost perfect writing assignment, an assignment which fulfills our requirements for logical need of the written word to contend with an important issue. At a recent board meeting, an eighth grade class was told by the teacher, it was decided, in view of the knowledge explosion, the space race, etc., to study the possibility of extending the school year one month into the summer vacation. Board members were, however, interested in hearing from all affected parties — parents, teachers, and students. It seemed that board members were not quite sure of the merits and demerits of the scheme. They were willing to be convinced one way or the other and would accept written statements from those who had something to say.

The students, of course, were outraged and pleaded for paper and the opportunity to put down in vivid and ringing terms just what they thought of the summer school plan and of the Board. The teacher, playing it cool, was finally persuaded to take class time to organize what seemed to be a non-English activity. I don't know at what point the students were let in on the joke and what the consequences were for the teacher's credibility, but a magnificent writing occasion was created. Writers were communicating for a crucial purpose to the most logical audience via the most appropriate medium, and proper employment of the medium could make a difference in what happened in the real world during the very real month of July.

Undoubtedly, inventive assignments based on critical analysis of literature, on personal experience and opinion, on description, exposition, and persuasion will always find students ready to respond, satisfied with their subject. These are the students who are continually asked by teachers to read their works in front of the room as examples of assignments well done. But this will not do for the vast and overwhelming majority of students who avoid the writing chore with alacrity and go intellectually limp in a demonstration of cursive resistance when finally confronted by white composition paper.

I have deliberately avoided other important phases of composition instruction. Certainly the workshop setting, editing and rewriting, the composition conference, evaluation by teacher and students, all bear on the making of a composition. These windmills I leave to other Quixotes.

Now, if what I have said has any validity, you should, at this point, be so stimulated, so eager to complain and rail, sneer and deride, that you are fairly frantic to get your hands on paper and pencil to compose a stinging epistolary editorial. You have the persona (indignant English teachers), you have your subject (why all of this just won't work), and now you need a recipient for your issue-centered response. May I suggest that you address your comments to Professor Manchel, who will, I am sure, publish them in booklet form as a significant contribution to the improvement of composition instruction. Or, if you must, send them to me, and I will read them and add them to my burgeoning file of vehement letters postmarked "Burlington, Vermont."

LA MANCHA AND HISTORY

by

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America in the late 1960's has been labeled a "sick society." The unlicensed social physicians often include in their diagnosis a weakness in the teaching of American history. Other practitioners overreact to some ultra-patriotic presentations of American history and assert that the true history of the United States is a dark one. The disillusionment of many of our young people comes from many sources — an unpopular war, a violent domestic environment, and a suffocation of affluence. To be patriotic in some circles is almost to be subversive. A small segment of the student population is sworn to disrupt and destroy American society. Our colleges and universities and all symbols of authority are the enemy.

One possible remedy for the current school population — it is too late for their older brothers and sisters — might be to allow them some latitude in interpreting our past history for themselves. Proper use of primary source materials could be one way of helping our young people come to some conclusions.

American history is generally taught to our young citizens in the fifth grade, in the eighth grade, and again in the eleventh and/or twelfth grade. Those going on to college are often exposed to still another survey and a variety of period or topical courses. Some differentiation of approach and materials as well as close attention to effective writing should be made but quite often are not.

American history as taught in American high schools needs vitalizing. Usually it is not the stimulating, challenging, and exciting subject it should be. The great majority of American history courses are built around a textbook narrative, written with a national market in mind, requiring little more than recall of innumerable "facts." More profitable and stimulating would be an American history course that drew on primary sources and on varying and changing interpretations.

In addition, many social studies teachers use objective tests in measuring the achievement of their students or "what they have learned." I would submit, psychologists notwithstanding, that there is very little justification for such practice. If one accepts the basic tenets of the La Mancha Project and agrees that the improvement of writing is the responsibility of all teachers and all disciplines, then the essay question becomes the most valid evaluation instrument. La Mancha aside, heavy reliance on objective test items reinforces the student's traditional view of history — that it is the memorization of "facts" and that there *are* right and wrong answers to every question or problem. Further, such procedures prevent the students from playing with ideas, from evaluating historical evidence, from drawing their own conclusions, and from sharpening their skill of writing effectively.

One should not infer from this position that effective writing is the primary aim of a good history course, but it certainly is one of the desired results to be gained from a year's study of man and his experiences. If one can demote the textbook and cure himself from the obsession of coverage, then that teacher is on his way to a better, more relevant, more modern, more effective history course. If that teacher can also bring himself to allow his students to read appropriate, well selected source materials and further give them the opportunity to write their own interpretation of man's past, he is then offering a realistic approach to problems that have plagued the teaching of history and caused so much disillusionment among past student groups. When one takes such dead aim at current practices in the history classroom of contemporary America, surely a rationale can be expected by the reader. I hope you will bear with this over-thirty teacher, who has been trained as a historian, as I consider how the criticized situation developed and attempt to illuminate some of the bright spots of the past.

Textbooks in American history began to appear in the United States immediately after the establishment of the federal union. The primary reasons were nationalism and democracy: there was an immediate move to direct the loyalty of the youth to the new nation rather than to the state or section; and authors, in addition, were also conscious of the Jeffersonian ideal of an educated electorate as necessary for the operation of democracy. In 1827, both Massachusetts and Vermont

mandated the teaching of United States history in all towns within their boundaries. From 1870 on, a growing number of colleges added history to their formal entrance requirements.

As American education developed during the nineteenth century, three cycles of teaching the history of the United States were established. Early in the development, the first cycle was placed in the elementary school so that students would be exposed to the history of their country before they left the schoolhouse. As students began to remain in school through the eighth grade, a second cycle of American history was included in the curriculum of that grade to expose the students immediately before they left school. Finally, when high schools expanded in number and scope, a third cycle was introduced. As each course was added, none was removed from the earlier grade levels, so that in most school systems today in the United States, students go through three cycles of American history before they graduate from high school.

The high school American history course was at first developed in accordance with what was written in available textbooks. The books were written by authors and used by teachers with no professional preparation. There were no professors of history and no major in history was offered in the nation's colleges. The American Historical Association was founded in 1884 with but nine members.

Meanwhile, history was established as a major field of study in colleges, and the *History Teacher's Magazine* appeared in 1909. Professional historians began to write textbooks for high school courses and teach prospective history teachers. In 1911 David Saville Muzzey wrote a textbook that shifted the midpoint of high school American history from 1783 to 1865. In 1912 James Harvey Robinson published his *New History* which advocated less attention to political, constitutional, and military aspects of history and more attention to social, cultural, and economic development. In the 1930's textbooks by Faulkner and Kepner and by F. P. Wirth adopted topical-unit organizations. The content and organization of these texts attempted partially to make some provision for the able high school student who had been somewhat forgotten as educators responded to a changing high school population.

Other factors affecting secondary schools and the place of American history in them became apparent in the early part of the twentieth century. Increased enrollments brought many youths for whom traditional courses were inappropriate or inadequate. The new psychology of G. Stanley Hall, William James, and Edward L. Thorndike, and the philosophy of John Dewey, changed pedagogical theory and influenced an ever-growing number of methods courses and methods texts, including those in the teaching of history. The progressives, demanding social reforms, influenced many school leaders. The social sciences — political science, economics, sociology — sought recognition in secondary schools. Normal-school professors, school superintendents and principals, and classroom teachers called for curriculum reform.

There is a lack in the educational literature of clearly focused aims for social studies instruction. The teacher not guilty of adopting the single aim of transmitting factual data by rote memorization tends instead to lose focus, in taking account of a multitude of stated objectives, which in categories of information, understandings, skills, attitudes, and behavior, sometimes number into the hundreds. Moreover, the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools cannot seem to establish distinctive aims for successive cycles of the American history course.

Henry Johnson has maintained that the controlling purpose of the study of American history is the understanding of the social and political world around us through the teaching of developmental history and the concomitant skill of the critical method. Such an objective could never be fulfilled within the format of most current classroom operations. *A Charter for the Social Sciences in the Schools,* drafted by Charles Beard, identifies three factors that inescapably condition what is taught in the social sciences: the necessities of scholarship, the realities of society, and the requirements of the teaching and learning process. Beard analyzed the social understanding for which Johnson had called and endorsed Johnson's emphasis on critical method: "A knowledge of how to acquire knowledge is a permanent possession which can be used throughout life."

If one accepts these ideas, then it becomes necessary to set about adopting different approaches to the teaching of American history. Not only should there be distinctive aims for the successive cycles of American history but differentiation should also be made for varying levels of ability; courses for academically able youth should include work with source materials and interpretations — the tools and the product of the historian. Although the views of Johnson and Beard were published between 1915 and 1934, their ideas are yet to be heeded by more than a handful of teachers and administrators.

Many publications, some intended for use in

secondary schools, made selected source materials available to teachers and students. The volume by Nevins and Commager, *The Heritage of America*, and Commager's *Documents of American History* are representative of many publications that testify to some continuing conviction that primary sources have a role in history teaching. Few teachers, however, could spare time from textbook teaching for such luxuries.

Development of an American history course appropriate to the abilities and needs of able students requires principles that differentiate elementary from advanced history. The most comprehensive treatment of this subject appears in Chapter IV of Henry Johnson's *Teaching of History*. Johnson, drawing to some extent on Charles Seignobos, describes advanced history as "thought about human experience." History concerns relationships, generalizations, abstractions, and thus ranges into the realm of ideas. Along with these considerations goes the understanding and application of historical method and the concomitant skills of investigation and writing. Johnson's view of advanced history is accepted by Ernest Horn and is alluded to by Edgar B. Wesley and Stanley P. Wronski. The question appears to be totally neglected in other methods books.

Except for Mary Sheldon Barnes' method and the source publications and problems organizations that appeared more than half a century ago, teachers until recently had little access to resources for implementing Johnson's ideas. As if in answer to the needs of the "deprived" history students of our nation, the paperback revolution has opened possibilities for appropriate programs.

The student who has been trained to work in the historical method literally falls on his face if there has not been a parallel training in effective writing. As Francis Bacon wrote, "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man." The student who is unable to be "exact" in his analysis and conclusions on the written page is not fulfilling the promise of his training. The principles of clear thinking and logical writing are necessities that must be included "in the bag" of every successful student of history. The use of words, both spoken and written, must be mastered by every student to the limit of his own individual excellence. To quote Aldous Huxley in the Spring 1962 *Daedalus:*

> Even on the verbal level, where they are most at home, educators have done a good deal less than they might reasonably have been expected to do in explaining to young people the nature, the limitations, the huge potentialities for evil as well as for good, of that greatest of all human inventions, language. Children should be taught that words are indispensable but also can be fatal — the only begetters of all civilization, all science, all consistency of high purpose, all angelic goodness, and the only begetters at the same time of all superstition, all collective madness and stupidity, all worse-than-bestial diabolism, all the dismal historical succession of crimes in the name of God, King, Nation, Party, Dogma. Never before, thanks to the techniques of mass communication, have so many listeners been so completely at the mercy of so few speakers. Never have misused words — those hideously efficient tools of all the tyrants, war-mongers, persecutors, and heresy-hunters — been so widely and so disastrously influential as they are today. Generals, clergymen, advertisers, and the rulers of totalitarian states — all have good reasons for disliking the idea of universal education in the rational use of language. To the military, clerical, propagandist, and authoritarian mind such training seems (and rightly seems) profoundly subversive To those who think that liberty is a good thing, and who hope that it may some day become possible for more people to realize more of their desirable potentialities in a society fit for free, fully human individuals to live in, a thorough education in the nature of language, in its uses and abuses, seems indispensable. Whether in fact the mounting pressures of over-population and over-organization in a world still enthusiastically dedicated to nationalistic idolatry will permit this kind of subversive linguistic education to be adopted by even the more democratic nations remains to be seen.

Whether one is dealing with very capable or less able youngsters, another resource that has been with us for several decades is finally being accepted as a valid classroom and learning tool. The use of the Hollywood feature films as well as specially prepared educational films is receiving wider and wider acceptance in the public schools and colleges.

Traditional teachers have for too long a time looked at the use of films in the classroom as the lesson plan of the lazy or ill-prepared teacher. Colleges have for quite a while now pointed with pride at this film series or that on their campus but were very quick to label these activities as extra-curricular. Slowly the realization has come upon American educators that students can be film literate while they may be functionally illiterate when it comes to the printed word. This current student generation has been raised with the electronic baby-sitter, that is, the family television set.

Much is said about this student generation that is derogatory, but in the view of the writer it is clearly the most moral generation in the his-

tory of our country. This is the first generation that has been wholly committed when it comes to the questions of war and race. They argue against the hypocrisy of a nation with such lofty ideals as ennunciated in the American Creed and Fourth of July oratory that nevertheless lets the Vietnam War drag on, allows the inequality gap to exist and widen between white and black, and spends billions of dollars annually to get to the moon while many Americans suffer the ravages of hunger.

One of the reasons that these young people have become so committed in these areas and so restless is this visual literacy mentioned above. The Vietnamese War is fought in their living rooms at 6:30 every evening with Chet Huntley or Walter Cronkite narrating. The racial revolution is reported into their homes with equal regularity. CBS and NBC both do in-depth documentaries on Hunger in America.

It is time that teachers, administrators and curriculum experts recognize the great impact that television and films have made on contemporary American youth and borrow a page from the book of the various mass media. Incorporating the film into the history or social studies classroom need not be restricted to contemporary and social issues. The publishers are flooding the market with "multi-media materials." It is up to the classroom teachers, who are the only ones in the final analysis who can get the job done, to begin to restructure their approach to the teaching of their subject. The questions and answer daily recitation, the lecturing, and the answering of the questions at the end of chapters are no longer enough. This essentially is what the students are telling us in their sometimes aggravating and immature way — but they are more immature and less sophisticated than we who teach and profess — or are they?

SCIENCE LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION

by

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A Position

The science teacher is indeed fortunate to have a basis in reality on which to develop learners who can observe, abstract, and evolve ideas. He is even more fortunate since the reality of the physical world offers a direct opportunity for the development of communication skills. No content field offers a better chance to communicate cognate data and its implications, since science content can be directly measured and qualified. Yet, though the task of communications skill development should be relatively easy, science teachers have not met success in their attempts to achieve it. The idea that, before writing or communicating can be accomplished, the author must have something to say seems obvious. But perhaps the major stumbling block in developing writing and communicative skills with secondary school science students is the fact that the obvious is often difficult to achieve.

The *structure* of secondary school science courses may be the deterrent to development of communicative skills, for, in structures where the prime responsibility for learning is assumed by the teacher, the learner is at a loss to have something to communicate about. To this point, I propose that major changes in course designs, teacher attitudes, and philosophic directions are precursers to the development of communicative skills. At least one problem presents itself clearly; in order to develop effective communication in science, the participating learner must have either

1) a cognitive position from which he is intrinsically motivated to communicate hard data and information to others, or
2) the learner must be in a position where he wishes to ask a series of questions in an attempt to delineate a problem.

Either of these situations provides the *need* to communicate, but neither can be expected to occur with any degree of regularity unless the learner assumes the major responsibilities and efforts of learning.

There are, in fact, discernible differences between science courses and most other courses in the secondary school curriculum. Science courses deal almost entirely with the realities of the natural universe. Thus, it is fitting to suggest that science courses find their operational basis, direction, and execution almost entirely in the learner's cognitive domain. There is usually minimal interaction between the affective domain and a learner's enterprises in the science classroom. This phenomenon is the outcome of years of attitude development among laymen; science is reflected as a solely objective pursuit. The fact that the cognate functions of learning are paramount in the sciences has conditioned teachers to use highly structured process tasks in the development and execution of curriculum design. Through process task assignment, the teacher is able to structure activities for learners which are highly logical and readily analyzed. Clearly, there is a general prejudice in the American school structure which favors cognate development. But this bias is both advantageous and problematic to the science teacher and alternately to the science learner. The philosophers of science caution that the popular view of science has already dehumanized science at considerable loss to prospective learners and "understanders" of science.

The school structure, which in science education prejudicially emphasizes the cognate domain and its development, de-emphasizes and minimizes the affective domain. Further, communicating is both a cognate *and* an affective enterprise. (Almost simultaneously, the secondary school almost ignores the psychomotor domain completely.) However gloomy this picture may be, it is through efforts such as the La Mancha project that sensitive, aware teachers can redirect the nature of learning and restructure the philosophic basis of the schools.

A Criticism

The goal of science educators is at least twofold. It is primarily to promote learning of the physical and biological characteristics and interactions of the environment. It is also to communicate, both internally and externally, (1) the hard data, (2) the dissonances, and (3) the affective domain attitudes which are outcomes of cognate learning. Toward these ends existing

curricula of most schools can now accomplish, with varying degrees of effectiveness, the first goal. The second part of the goal is far more difficult to accomplish for several reasons. First, there has never been a continuous and well designed effort toward the development of communicative skills in science learners. Second, the nature of science courses usually dictates that most communication within the structure of a course be confined to class notes and stultifying laboratory reports. Indeed, the classical laboratory makes a mockery of any efforts to report ideas in the learner's view of reality. Most reports are done in preconceived form with data and findings supplied in accord with "what the instructor wants." Thus, the outcome of the highly structured, uni-directional laboratory is a report that is boring to both writer and reader. Laboratory reports are frequently reduced to the intellectually dishonest task of "fudging up" the data to fit teacher expectations. Very few teachers find it humorous that many reports of this kind are done during the Spanish class just prior to the period when they are due. The learners, however, do find it humorous. They may see in it the basis for criticism of an entire educational structure. To rectify this problem, we need only ban laboratory reports. But that does not solve the problem of how to develop the art of communication in the science learner. Fortunately, the science learner is precisely the same individual as the English learner, the math learner, the history learner, and the language learner. And so another advantage accrues to the teacher of science.

An Active Approach

Positions and Criticisms may be developed to the point where the reader can rightfully expect meaningful examples of how to change existing structures. Toward this end, let us first examine some questions on which a science curriculum is based, and second, look at some alternative modes of communicating ideas.

Project participants are asked to reflect on the following questions with the view of preparing for a dialogue at the conference.

1. If, as pointed out in the Position of this paper, the nature of a science curriculum is a governing factor in the development of communicative skills, what then is the basis on which the author suggests that "classical" general science courses *preclude* meaningful communication by junior high school and senior high school students?
2. Is it, in fact, correct to suggest that science teachers cannot participate in the direction of writing projects unless the curriculum is dependent on individual learning?
3. Can teacher directed and controlled learning produce students who have something to communicate about?
4. Does currently available research offer any foundations on which individual learning can be supported?
5. Is there any reason to believe that individualized learning will produce more able communicators?

Project participants are requested to *consider* the communication techniques suggested in the following two categories. The first group of technique suggestions are directed at teacher communications, the second group toward students.

Teachers' Modes of Communicating

Example I
10th grade
Biology

A. *Content* — The internal structures and functions of a given laboratory animal.
B. *Behavioral Objective* — At the conclusion of the presentation(s), the learner should be able to dissect a given animal and describe the functions and relationships of the internal organs.
C. *Two Alternative Modes of Communicating*
   1. "Talk" description of the task (accompanied by textbook, chalk board, ditto sheet supportive information).
   2. Video tape description of the task with close camera angle examples of important techniques and information (accompanied by . . . same as #1).
D. Participants please suggest expected learner responses (both positive and negative) to each mode of presentation.

	Estimate of Learners' Positive Reactions	*Estimate of Learners' Negative Reactions*
Mode 1	1.	1.
"Talk"	2.	2.
Approach	3.	3.
Mode 2	1.	1.
"Video Tape"	2.	2.
Approach	3.	3.

Example II
11th or 12th grade
A Physical Science

A. *Content* — The nature and philosophy of science (as an operational activity of men) and the characteristics of scientists.
B. *Behavioral Objectives* — At the conclusion of the learning activities the student should be able to describe a scientist and answer questions about scientists (without dependence on

the clichés that are so common in the layman's view).

C. *Modes of Communications*
   1. Lecture by the teacher and assigned readings.
   2. Discussion and assigned readings.
   3. A simulation game (the game "Noble Prize" is suggested; you may want to play it with your colleagues and students).

Students' Modes of Communicating
(Stimulated by teacher)

Task 1. As teacher, it is your goal to have students learn the fundamentals of hypothesis construction. Give groups of three players a checker board and two identifiable markers or coins for each player. Present a task such as, "cooperatively make up a game with a set of rules which gives each player a chance to capture the other player's pieces."

Record outcome of this task:

Task 2. Ask a 12th grade student who is doing well in any science course to assist you in designing a video tape. His task is to outline and sequence the topic you choose for presentation. Ask another student to edit the design of the first student. Is it advisable to bring both students together to resolve differences in the design as seen by each student?

Record outcome of this task:

Summary:

The many modes of communicating are as pertinent to the tasks of science teachers as to those of any other teachers. Though the science teacher has many advantages in the fact that science is directly and clearly a cognitive domain enterprise, the task of developing communicative skills is no easier than the same task faced by teachers of other subjects. It is clear that the major factor in accomplishing this task is the teacher's attitude to the structure of learning.

FILM-MAKING BELONGS TO ALL DISCIPLINES

by

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The practical goals and courses of action for advancing film education in elementary and secondary schools are four-fold:

(1) To provide the simplest kind of guide to the various aspects of film production, (2) to enable future film-makers to become acquainted with the different departments in film-making so that they may see where their talents lie, (3) to encourage the spirit of creativity and craftsmanship, and (4) to show the relationship between film and the other forms of communication.

The process of showing, discussing, teaching, and making films has had many positive results this year. At Champlain Valley Union High School film-making has started to explode other curricula, and now other classes (English, social studies, art, and science) are accepting film term papers or film projects as independent study contracts. That is, students may elect to produce a short film in lieu of a term paper or a research project for independent study.

Film-making appeals to students because it is something that they can make their own. A student film-maker can quite literally, by means of the lens of a camera, frame his own world and re-order his own environment.

As educators we have realized the impact that media have had on the curriculum; and with the excellent, inexpensive, amateur filmmaking equipment that is now available, and with filmmaking being recognized as a bonafide educational activity, we must start to take advantage of the film as a tool of education.

There is no magic formula or packaged film program that is available for mass consumption. Each teacher must decide for himself what the objectives for the program and for the students will be. In whatever discipline filmmaking is being employed, the over-all objectives should be (1) to develop new sensitivity to visual language through the making of films, (2) to foster greater personal sensitivity to the world we live in by examining it through the lens of a camera, (3) to expand the students' knowledge of the media, and (4) to stimulate creativity.

In order for these objectives to be achieved, the teacher needs to take into consideration the materials and facilities available. Speaking from experience, it is well to take an inventory of film-making equipment that is owned by students or their families. Most of the equipment that we now use at Champlain Valley is now owned by the school department.

Where should one begin? There are many approaches to filmmaking that may be used. You can work with an entire class, in small groups, or with individuals. The first ingredient of any film is an idea. Some teachers believe that the ideas perceived by students should be verbalized and scripted. If a student is verbally able to express himself, it might indeed be helpful for him to outline his idea to story-treatment to scenario to a precise shooting script. For the less verbal or less print-oriented student, writing could be a problem, and the project would never get off the ground. In this case the student should not be asked to conceptualize his ideas verbally but should be allowed to develop them on film.

The story board usually is used as a means of transmitting the idea for a film onto paper. As a technique in the conception of a frame-by-frame development of a film, a student may by means of sketches or photographs taken with a Polaroid camera translate his ideas into concrete form.

The next step is to bring to realization the ideas of the filmmaker, and this brings us to the actual shooting and editing of film. Each situation must produce the formula for achieving the footage desired. It is important for the successful filming of any sequence for the filmmaker to concern himself with the continuity, the shooting location, and the equipment; what lenses, film speed, shooting apparatus, etc.

As in the art classroom a student is trained in techniques so that he may create as an individual, so, too, the filmmaker must prepare himself for the final act of individualistic creation.

If it is possible, students should be given the opportunity to view and discuss experimental films made by such filmmakers as Andy Warhol

and Norman McLaren. Films by experimental filmmakers will demonstrate as wide a variety of techniques as possible to stimulate students.

After viewing and discussing experimental films, allow the students a chance to produce something of their own. The following examples illustrate possible assignments that would be given to beginning students:

1. Using 100 feet of film, begin practicing the various techniques such as wipe, lap dissolve, fade in, fade out, etc.
2. Take a shot that is correctly exposed.
3. Shoot one stop over-exposed.
4. Shoot one stop under-exposed.
5. Shoot a scene exposed for background.
6. Shoot a scene for foreground.
7. Shoot a scene for backlight, etc.

The list can be as long or as sophisticated as the teacher wants to make it, depending upon the needs of the students.

When the teacher and the students view the rushes, it is easy to see concrete results of what has been learned. After shooting (and usually re-shooting), the student is ready to edit. It is very difficult to teach editing as it is an activity that must be done by the individual. A teacher may assist students and instruct them, but it has to be on a one-to-one basis. It is best to instruct students in cutting and then let them find their own way. A *must* on the recommended reading lists of young filmmakers and teachers should be a book on how to edit. Two books that students have found useful are *How to Edit* (Focal Press, $2.50) and the Kodak book on editing.

An interesting exercise in editing is to give each member of a class three or four hundred feet of processed film which the students are to reduce to one hundred feet. Processed news footage usually can be obtained at no cost from local television stations. It is amazing to see what students using identical footage will create through the process of editing.

Sound can be very important in filmmaking. Composing and editing sound tracks are useful ways of developing sensitivity to sound. Syncronous sound tracks at the elementary or the secondary level are prohibitive because of the technical complexity involved and because of the cost. Nevertheless, students do have a number of avenues open to them. The tape recorder, if used with imagination, will enable students to become quite creative with sound. The only limitation involved here is the potential and creativity of the user. The "what" a student tapes can be anything that produces sound — from human beings to machines. "How" one tapes has variations also. Sounds may be taped at various speeds, sounds may be superimposed on one another, or sounds may be arranged in sequence to symbolize a certain aspect of life.

Specific assignments that may be given for starters are:

1. Taping normal conversation — interviewing people on a controversial topic and then editing the tape into a finished product.
2. Taping the sounds that people make — laughing, talking, breathing, crying, snoring, walking, running, skipping, etc.
3. Using sounds to tell a story — placing sounds in sequence for meaning: the alarm clock, the shower, noises in the kitchen, the school bus, the bell at school, noise of students passing from class to class, sounds in class, the cafeteria, classes, bells, bus, T.V., dinner dishes, the dishwasher running, TV clicked off, brushing teeth, getting into bed, snoring . . .
4. Using sounds to create certain moods or themes.
5. Music can be edited to create certain moods.

Films may have sound tracks that require simple narration, sound effects, or a musical accompaniment. We see here once again the possibilities of involving students and personnel from various disciplines.

All educators would agree that it is what is learned and not what is produced that is important. We should not be interested in producing the next great epic, or in working for the sole purpose of final screening or film festival. We should be working to get students involved in seeing film as a mode of expression.

English, science, history, art — indeed, any of the disciplines could integrate filmmaking into their course of study. In all of these areas there are three basic kinds of film that students can produce: documentary, narrative, and animation. The documentary is perhaps the most popular with young filmmakers. They can film documentaries for social studies classes, using cut-outs from magazines and then filming them. A tape recorder then can be used to provide the narration. In the chemistry or the biology classes students can film actual experiments. The "how to do it film" has many possibilities in a variety of classes. For students who are not print oriented, it is a way in which they may become totally involved in the learning process.

The type of film that students see on television and in the movies is the narrative. It is the form that they usually will try to imitate. This form is more demanding as it does require an idea

that has been transformed to story form and then scripted. The transformation of an idea to a visual story board requires skill and extensive work. The shooting of a narrative also requires preparation, for the work is precise and demanding. This is where the story board becomes so important and valuable a tool to the filmmaker. It is here also that we see that the student film is a creative process involving time, skill, and work and that it does differ from the "home movie" type of endeavor.

The third type of film is animation, and it requires separate techniques and skills. This type of film is one of the easiest to produce and may be made inexpensively. Students in elementary as well as secondary schools can experience a great amount of success with the animated film. Simplified animation is within the grasp of any student who is able to take pictures one at a time.

Using the animated camera, the following types of exercises can be easily animated:

1. Teachers can start their classes by making "scratch" films; the students simply scratch on leader, and when it is projected on the screen the scratches form patterns of light and design.
2. A one-day magic marker "happening" is another type of project that is easily done with students of all ages. You can remove all the emulsion from junk stock or simply provide clear leader for your classes. Allow the students to draw on the film with paint, magic marker, or crayon. (Warning! — Make sure the projectionist cleans the gate on the projector after a film like this has been screened.)
3. The collage film is easy to produce, using bits of junk stock that can be decorated by scratching or painting. The students then re-splice the film to form a new one.
4. Cutouts or photographs can be mounted on cardboard and moved from place to place to simulate movement.
5. Models made of clay can be easily re-arranged and are easy to use in an animated sequence. Figures made out of papier mâché are also easy to use in an animated film because they can be moved about quickly and easily between shots.
6. Flipcards can consist of a series of drawings or sketches that are made on flexible cards. As the student flips through the cards, the drawings appear to move. The flip cards can be filmed individually for a couple of frames, or the camera can simply film the effect of manual manipulation of the flipcards.

There are many books available that describe the simple operations of animation. The nice thing about this technique is that it is very inexpensive, requiring only a camera with single frame capabilities, some lights and the material to be animated, imagination, and film stock.

Ultimately the finished documentary, narrative, or animated film will require an audience. Filmmakers are anxious to have their work screened. Film festivals on the high school level are becoming very popular. The Forensic and Debate Tournament held annually at the University of Vermont has made it possible this year for young filmmakers to have their films screened at this state festival.

Many instructors feel that the film should be a personal and private matter between the instructor and the pupil. Others screen films only in groups concerned, while a few schools have public showings of various nature, going all the way to the ultimate, the student film festival.

Concern has also been expressed about the effect of filmmaking, film study, and competition in general on the psyche of the student. It is felt that there are no more dangers encountered in these areas than in any of the other creative and academic competitive situations to which a student is exposed in his school years.

Many critics and educators express concern over the place of film education and filmmaking in the curriculum. Miss Pauline Kael, noted film critic, takes the view of today's youngsters and urges keeping film outside the curriculum:

> It's only a movie. What beautiful words. At movies, you're left gloriously alone. You say it stinks and nobody's shocked. That's something you can't do with a Dickens novel or a Beethoven symphony or even a poem by Browning and because you can't, because they're all preselected and prejudged and geared for greatness, you don't talk about them with the other kids the way you do about movies.[1]

While I do not agree with Miss Kael, I certainly can appreciate her concerns. Filmmaking or film study should not be restricted to a particular class within a structured grade setup. Filmmaking does work within the school, and it is a process that students as well as teachers find exciting and valuable. We are now faced with the problem of proving that it works.

One of the problems confronting teachers is that we are desperate for sources and resources. We need information, training, and equipment. In-service programs are certainly an important measure for preparing filmmaking teachers. One of the tragedies in our present system is that

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[1] Pauline Kael, "It's Only a Movie." *Film Study in Higher Education*, by David C. Stewart, (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1966), p. 133.

teachers know primarily one type of film — the "educational film." We need to broaden this scope. As the teacher of writing must write if he is going to be truly effective with his students, so, too, the film teacher must make films if he is going to work efficiently with students in this creative process.

Discussion and debate about the shortage of facts and the surplus of generalizations by those who offer solutions could go on forever. It is a fact that film is the "now" medium, and if we are going to be a valuable part of "what's happening" we must take advantage of and let our students become involved with the phenomenon of our times — the moving image. As every teacher is concerned with print as a mode of communication, every teacher must come to regard film as an equally important method of communication.

WRITING, ENGLISH, AND THE MASS MEDIA

by

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What I am to concern myself with here is, I take it, the teaching of writing in the context of the English class — and, by extension, in the broader context of the humanities. Let me say at the outset that the more often teachers of English join with teachers of other disciplines to see and present mankind whole, not as a fragmented, disjointed, compartmentalized freak of nature, the better their students will listen and comprehend. Let there be open doors between classrooms, not isolation chambers, no matter how exciting the teaching that takes place in them. Let there be a common current running through all our efforts. Then we may view the process of composition as it relates to learning and to life, as well as to our field.

The art of effectively putting down ideas upon paper is, first of all, a disciplined art. Professor Robert Cochran, in the proceedings of this conference a year ago, described it succinctly:

> The salient points are, I think, organization — continuity and logical progression — disciplined thought — operating in concert with an athletic, a lively intelligence.

In these respects, Donald Murray, another of your distinguished consultants, underscores, first, the experience of seeing: "Before anything else, the writing course is the practice of perception;" and then the experience of form: "The writer — the artist — brings order to disorder. . . . The artist doesn't so much admire form as he hungers for it."

The most cogent, the most persuasive brief exposition of the art of writing that I know is an essay by Samuel Eliot Morison entitled "History as a Literary Art" (from *Land and Sea,* Alfred A. Knopf, 1953). On the surface, it is intended for graduate students of history; in fact, however, it speaks directly to all who aspire to write well, at the same time strongly implying a significant fact which La Mancha seeks to emphasize — the close relevance of the composition process to all of the disciplines.

I am paraphrasing the advice which Morison gives to young historians when I say that effective composition reflects a "quick, warm synthesis" between perceiving, planning and writing. This synthesis results, he points out, in clarity, vigor, and objectivity — the kind of objectivity which assures that the writer is aware of an audience other than himself. This "quick, warm synthesis" implies also a vitality born of discipline informed and tempered by the imagination. In the limited space of his little essay, Professor Morison says much and implies more that is of direct value to the aspiring writer — or the teacher of writing. I can but commend to you its pages. Now, having succumbed to the temptation to proffer my recipe for effective writing, let me move more directly to our particular concern here today.

Surely there can be no question, in this day, of the place of mass media in the teaching of writing in particular and English in general. If we hope to find our students and touch their lives, we must go "where it is" — to television, and radio, and the motion picture; to the mass circulation magazines; to the paper-back bookstands; and to the newspapers. Witness how in their free time in school, the students will cluster around the magazine racks in the library (if they are permitted access to it!). Listen to their conversations between classes. If Michelangelo is the topic of discussion in class, is it not likely that some will have seen "The Agony and the Ecstasy" on the Late Show? I recently tried to sell one of my sections on buying individual copies of B. F. Skinner's *Walden II* for reading and discussion. I muffed it; my ploy drew the kind of response which destroys a project at birth. But after class one boy asked me if I had read Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. He himself hadn't — he had seen the movie — but he knew it was available in book form. And he obviously knew what kind of fodder I was looking for, and why. I bought the book and read it. For his class it turned out to be a far more powerful motivation and challenge than my original choice.

In our humanities course at Springfield (which integrates the study of English, history, music and art) we used, while I was there, the motion picture versions of "The Caine Mutiny," "High Noon," "The Ox-Bow Incident," and "On the Waterfront," among others. The response of the various classes was never the same, but it was always intense and important. Impressed upon my memory is the discussion which erupted fol-

lowing a showing of "All the King's Men." It lasted for three days, throughout six class periods, and concerned the question whether the end justifies the means. This wasn't at all the focus we had had in mind when we chose the film. But debate raged until the students had somehow resolved, each in his own way, at least some of their queries and doubts.

Life, Look, or *Newsweek* on student unrest; *Teen, Time* or *The National Observer* on drugs or violence; *Playboy* on Marshall McLuhan or the New Left; The Beatles with "Revolution," The Rascals and "People Gotta Be Free," Spanky and Our Gang with "Give a Damn," Simon and Garfunkel, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan on man's inhumanity to man — these are where student concern can be tapped. The English teacher looking for something to happen, to spring up and take over and move ideas in the classroom, must acknowledge this. Further, he must look and listen himself to what the students are seeing and hearing — and do so with an open mind. What is it that I have already said, and quoted others as saying? The good writer must first perceive? So, too, the good teacher must perceive and try to understand whatever it is that has the eye and ear of his students.

Is not all this pretty obvious — almost cliché (no matter how many teachers may currently be demonstrating an unwillingness or inability to act upon it)? One cannot question the eloquence and the appeal of the mass media for his students — and, therefore, their significance for his classroom.

Yet there is something about it all that bothers me. It was articulated well, and in good time, at the La Mancha conference just one year ago by Professor Robert Daniels. I want to bring his words back sharply into focus now, for they keynote my thesis today (and I am heading toward one, I hope) concerning composition, the teaching of English, and the mass media.

> The teaching of structured writing and the structured thinking which it conveys has never been easy. It is not made any easier by the recent technological developments in mass communication, radio and especially TV, which have massively shifted the main area of public discourse from the written — and structured — word, to the linear stream of speech. All the efforts teachers are making to teach structured communication can be and are, I fear, being undermined by the facile flow of one-dimensional ideas through the media. The challenge is removed for the thinker to structure his thoughts, and the audience is locked into the one line of discourse — unless it loses interest and turns the tube off. Hence the premium in communication is not building up ideas into a meaningful whole, but maintaining a line of constantly entertaining banter. The building of structured thought can easily come to seem a tedious exercise in futility to the average student.

It is important at this juncture to ask why we are so concerned with the teaching of composition. Why was the La Mancha Project conceived? A private foundation, we are told, approached various people at the University of Vermont "to explore ways in which writing could be improved." Why writing? Why in the midst of a culture attuned to mass communications media, to "the facile flow of one-dimensional ideas through the media?"

May it not be precisely to ignite the kind of thinking which will recognize that even in the media, perhaps especially in the media, since they are so central, thinking is *not,* indeed, always linear — and to appreciate the difference between when it is and when it is not? To develop taste and to insure discretion?

It cannot be that we wish to produce generations which have learned to write only so that they may understand the media, generations which can write but not read. Indeed, we could not even hope to such an end. Writers, to write well, must write for intelligent readers, such readers as will demand and recognize structure, control, and vigor. Writers must themselves be good readers, sensitive to the power of ordered thought, of imagination, and of language. The aim in English classrooms must not be either/or: either the class that is "with it," vibrating to the media; or the class that is laboring with "Antigone," or *The Canterbury Tales,* or "A Few Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey," or *Tom Sawyer,* or *Moby Dick.*

The reading of the classics, according to Samuel Eliot Morison, will break down provincialism, refresh the spirit, and provide a better philosophical insight into the ways of mankind than will many, more current writings. It will, as well, sharpen one's sense of the language of order, of precision, of imagination. Nor can the approach be either/or. The student must learn, on the one hand, to perceive the past through his insight into the present; on the other, to weigh and guide his life today in part through knowledge of the past. He must value order and clarity wherever he finds them and decry confusion and unreason wherever he encounters them.

This brings me toward the end of my dissertation — and closer to my theses (they are plural now, I perceive) concerning the teaching of composition, the La Mancha Project, and the English

curriculum. Let me define my final object in terms of three questions from among those raised by Esther Urie in relation to this Project last year (somewhat in reverse order, and somewhat edited):

a. How should the directors of the pilot program coordinate their efforts with those of the co-operating schools (and, indeed, from teacher to teacher within South Burlington High School itself)?

b. How does one incorporate into the English curriculum a 50% to 60% emphasis upon composition and still include most of the content that has traditionally been taught?

c. Is it the aim of La Mancha to develop composition and related skills only, or to have concern as well for the development of human values?

On the first point, the matter of effectively co-ordinating efforts throughout the program, let me offer this observation on the basis of my understanding of the way in which the Project has evolved thus far. The aim is to reach young people at a variety of levels of academic ability, in a variety of communities, through a variety of departments and of teachers within those departments.

By all means, then, plan and produce a specific and exciting package; then, prize the experience, the insight, and the individual resources of the various teachers involved in the program. Make absolutely clear the rationale and arm it well; then, encourage the imaginative and inventive adaptation of it by each chosen teacher in terms of his understanding, his strengths, and his terrain.

Do not spread yourself too thin — or populate the curriculum too thickly. I think I see signs of La Mancha trying to be all things at once. The danger is, of course, that by so doing it may become in the long run nothing. Through an emphasis upon composition lies one excellent path to the crucial goals toward which the study of English points, toward the intellectual discipline and the human insight that the study of English can comprehend.

Most emphatically, resort to the media — but selectively. Leave time to examine and to relate. Meanwhile, do not play down our heritage in literature, but draw upon it judiciously.

Join in common interest with workers in other fields, the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences, the practical arts — but in a defined and considered way. At Springfield's Riverside Junior High School, vocational arts students have, as a project, constructed duck decoys. In English class they researched for models. In mathematics they worked out the complicated dimensions involved in the design and the laminations. Back in English again, they wrote up their plans. Then they built their decoys in the shop. Finally they painted them, in accordance with their initial research, in the Art Room. This is integrated learning, and organizational and composition skills have their place at the core of it.

If, indeed, you follow through in extending La Mancha from grade nine through grade twelve, allocate and limit. Shun redundancy like the plague. There is ample space into which to fit much that we have traditionally considered within the purview of English, much that we as individual teachers love. But we cannot do all at once — and we *must* not do it over and over. We look to improve writing. Let us but concentrate on that, and much that is literary, present and past, much that speaks to our students, of today and yesterday, will immediately put itself forward.

Finally, it must surely be that our focus upon composition implies more than mere irritation with the present level of writing skills in our society. It all goes back, does it not, to a recognition of the deep and compelling need for human understanding — on virtually every level, of virtually every kind? Does not such understanding rest upon a willingness and an ability to descry order and distinguish relationships, then to employ order and clarify relationships; to perceive and to select motivations, ideas, alternatives; to respect and with care to utilize the language; to honor the minds of others by speaking to them with an awareness of their humanity?

In my view the way for La Mancha lies clear. It pursues a development of communication skills together with a respect for these skills — a respect based upon sensitivity to the needs, the hang-ups, and the potentialities of humankind.

REVERSING THE PROCESS

by

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Three important facts have emerged from the initial year of the La Mancha Project. First, the incredible inefficiency of the existing educational system. Second, the demonstrated ability of enthusiastic and competent teachers to reform that system. And third, the undeniable necessity to study mass media in the schools.

No one needs to describe to professional teachers the mess in our classrooms. We have lived too long with programs designed to comfort the lazy, to placate the spineless, and to shelter the incompetent. For too long we have excused this educational sham by worshipping the idol of precedent, by deceiving ourselves that tradition was synonymous with truth. Fortunately, this mental mediocrity is coming to an end. We are at last realizing, as Emerson pointed out decades ago, that "Education dwarfs those who conform to its standards."

If the warning buzzer has sounded for the long-awaited reforms, it is, in part, because of the dedication and skill of the La Mancha teachers. They have succeeded in spite of insufferable scheduling problems, extremely limited funds, and unbelievably complacent colleagues. If next year, many more ninth grade, college-bound students are involved in writing workshops, inter-disciplinary curricula, and mass media studies, it is because a handful of people, scorned and scarred, are still reaching for the unreachable stars.

Even so, many teachers I meet still question the value of this romantic quest to improve the teaching of writing in the schools. They sceptically ask, "Just what's so new or so good about the La Mancha Project?" I try to explain the value of our three annual state conferences — September, January and April — during which we bring high school teachers and students together to discuss curricular matters; the value of composition workshops at the University of Vermont where *we pay* teachers to study evaluation techniques for use in *their* classrooms; the value of having both a state literary magazine and a state newspaper to publish students' writings; the value of a state newsletter for teachers to improve their own writing skills while at the same time providing an exchange for information about writing; and the value of frequent lesson plans and study guides to stimulate discussion about composition.

"That's fine," they say, "but what's so new about the teaching of writing? We've been using Professor Don Murray's workshop methods and Dr. James Moffett's sequential approach for years." Maybe so. But when I go into these teachers' classrooms, talk with their students and question how often they write each week, meet in small groups to read each other's papers, get to choose their own topics, discuss the techniques of writing in history and science classes; select their own books, see full-length feature films, and so on *ad infinitum*, their usual responses are "Not very often . . . rarely . . . never!"

Maybe what we're doing here in the state of Vermont is not new or refreshing. Maybe the thousands of college freshmen who enter the University of Vermont have forgotten how they were taught to write, or maybe the hundreds of high school classrooms I visit each year are not valid examples of what teachers are doing in today's dehumanized educational environment. Maybe so!

No matter. Our main thrust is not to prove how revolutionary we are. Nor is it to show how meaningful changes can be achieved by moderate, able and determined individuals who choose to remain in the school system rather than escape from it. Instead, the La Mancha Project is concerned with *studying the process of writing, especially the areas of composing and communicating*. Starting with the assumption that the most important ingredient in studying student writing is the student himself, each of us is trying to discover not only how we can be more effective in helping adolescents to express themselves better, but also how we can make the work more enjoyable for everyone.

With such vague and non-behavioral objectives, it is not hard to understand why the program has a number of critical weaknesses. Our communications operation is badly constructed and articulated. Our methods of evaluation leave much to be desired. Schools find it difficult to implement some of our materials. And many English departments are unable to co-ordinate

their classes with their counterparts in the physical and social sciences. It would appear to those outside our world that we are indeed madmen hopelessly fighting windmills which, as in another romantic setting the arrogant De Guiche told Cyrano, "may swing round their huge arms and cast you down into the mire."

But this is only *a* possibility. Another possibility suggested by Cyrano is that we might go "up — among the stars." Fortunately, there is reason for optimism in our work. By not deluding the schools or ourselves that there were any ready-made solutions, we have had to re-examine what we have been doing, and we have re-learned some essential propositions about writing in general and program organization in particular. First, it has become clear to all of us that writing is essentially a process of weaving many varied strands into a finished work. It cannot be taught or learned quickly. It cannot be structured the same way with each individual, let alone with each class and school. And no one involved with the process can succeed without patience, skill, and motivation. Still further, the learner benefits more from encouragement than from negative comments. Too often, critics and colleagues forget this. Second, no one writes just for the sake of writing. Hopefully, he has something to say. His subject matter consists of ideas, facts, and opinions, shaped by language and syntax. To a large degree, that subject matter is the basis of a significant academic program and those who administer the schools need to provide a suitable setting which will improve, not impede, the learning process. Third, the writer needs both imagination and discipline to communicate effectively with his intended audience. He must, in effect, be stimulated by the unlimitable possibilities that are open to him and then helped to discriminate between what he thinks he sees and what he actually sees. Fourth, the teaching of writing requires that we ourselves be willing to learn: learn not only about the writing process but also about the art of teaching. There is no place in our program for those who have already decided that there is nothing new worth discovering.

We have also realized that our work is most effective when the following organizational plan is carefully followed:

1. Teachers from the various disciplines set aside a predetermined time each month for the entire school year to plan, discuss, and evaluate the program.
2. Administrators give the teachers money, time, and responsibility for attending La Mancha conferences and evaluation sessions.
3. High school departments maintain their individuality; otherwise they have nothing of value to offer us except servitude. All that we ask is that our materials and methods be tried, and that the schools inform us of the results, coupled with the reasons why.
4. One person in each school, designated as coordinator, maintains continuous communication both with the staff and the La Mancha director.
5. When the approaches prove successful, the schools implement them in their curricula next year for all students at that grade level and in that program. For example, departments should now be planning a ninth grade college-bound curriculum which includes field trips, in-class reading libraries, motion picture screenings and discussions, class publications, peer-group paper conferences, and inter-disciplinary writing assignments.

In essence, our investigations so far have helped us to discover a great deal about our needs, about our relations with other human beings, and about ourselves. In each instance, we have witnessed the tremendous influence of the mass media not only in our lives but also in our culture. Consequently, the La Mancha Project, in 1969-1970, is turning its attention towards more meaningful ways of using films, books, drama, radio, television, speech, tape recorders, magazines, newspapers, and recordings in the teaching of writing.

Our main concern now is how to relate the teaching of writing to the student's thoughts and experiences, how to encourage adolescents to examine and to understand themselves through writing and working with the mass media. In effect, we are reversing the existing educational system. Instead of prescribing, we are searching; instead of limiting, we are extending; instead of talking, we are acting. To repeat, the essential problem for us is how the student adjusts himself to the world in which he lives. And following the teachings of the distinguished scholar Jean Piaget, we are not ashamed of the concept of adjustment. Its meaning denotes stopping and starting, winning and losing, comprehending and gaining knowledge. As Piaget explains it:

> Knowledge is not a copy of reality. To know an object, to know an event, is not simply to look at and make a mental copy, or image, of it. To know an object is to act on it. To know is to modify, to transform the object, and to understand the process of this transformation, and as a consequence to understand the way the object is constructed. An operation is thus the essence of knowledge; it is an interiorized action which modifies the object of knowledge.

It is our hope, therefore, that through the study of the process of communication, we will become more knowledgeable about the teaching of writing. Furthermore, we believe that a knowledge of the various communication processes will help interested individuals to discover for themselves what they think and feel about the mass media, and why they accept or reject one work of art rather than another.

So much for next year's major theme. Unless we understand *the emphasis on examining the processes of mass media,* we will fail before the school year begins in September. Let me focus now on some other relevant matters for 1969-1970: such concerns as the need for standards, the two new programs to be developed this summer, and the individual school responsibilities.

Basic to any study we conduct is the tacit agreement that we are not going to vulgarize the curriculum. It is one thing to want to teach about mass media and something else to know how. Students, for example, spend thousands of hours watching television, and we need to exercise judgment in deciding what is worthwhile discussing. Watching movies is also a valuable experience as is listening to recordings or reading newspapers, but not when they are used as escapes from the more important job of critical discussions and inquiry. Therefore, we encourage, not discourage, teachers to use discrimination in their selection of classroom materials.

Another difficulty with the teaching of mass media is that many people unwittingly accept the current pop fallacy, "anyone born later in history knows more than his predecessors." It is not our intention to replace the study of the past with the study of the popular and the present. We intend, instead, to combine the best of both worlds because they share a common heritage and thus similar human experiences and difficulties. To put it another way, our study of the mass media rests on the principle that acknowledges both the psychological needs of the young and the logical demands of the material. We do not intend to compromise either our educational principles or our responsibility to provide sound leadership.

As a result, we are preparing two mass media programs for 1969-1970: one for ninth-grade general students at Champlain Valley Union High School; one for tenth-grade college-bound students at South Burlington High school. Both courses will be based on a sound educational foundation, not on an emotional one. CVU's curriculum, for example, will emphasize not only the various kinds of mass media that influence an individual's opinions, attitudes, and judgements, but also how these media function and develop. The overall objective is critical thought. At the same time, students will be encouraged to explore film-making, television production, and newspaper publishing. The SBHS curriculum will also explore these areas, only the emphasis will be more on drama, speech, television, and motion pictures. In each school, including those in the Project that will try these materials in other curricula, the students, across departmental boundaries, will be communicating their feelings, their ideas, and their standards. What they say, how they express it, and what it means for education form the nucleus of this year's La Mancha Project.

Let me illustrate just one way in which we are going about our work for the next year: film study in the schools.

Recognizing that some of the formidable problems connected with screen education — a responsibility that also includes the study of television — are accessibility and availability of equipment and materials not only for instructors but also for individual students, the La Mancha teachers are implementing many of the major findings of the recently concluded Project in Educational Communication of Teachers College, Columbia University, under the able direction of Dr. Louis Forsdale. The TC project, for example, established that an important solution to availability was the 8mm cartridge projector, which allows individuals as well as groups to examine closely and repeatedly particular motion pictures. While the value of close reading has always been a part of any worthwhile academic enterprise, it has not always been possible with movies. Now, with the 8mm cartridge projectors, films can be carefully and continually scrutinized.

Consequently, the La Mancha Project, in cooperation with several Vermont high schools, is beginning to build a collection of important silent films in cartridges, and five Fairchild Mark IV-RV projectors have been ordered for a number of learning centers in the state. Included are films by D. W. Griffith, Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., W. S. Hart, Edwin S. Porter, George Méliès and Mack Sennett. Students and teachers will be able to use these motion pictures both as a source for serious study and for enjoyment.

We are using a number of sources for ordering such films, almost all of which are listed in *8mm Film Directory* (Comprehensive Service Corporation, 250 West 64th Street, New York, 10023).

Since the Fairchild cartridge holds approximately twenty-five minutes of film, it will be most

useful for short movies. Full-length features will be serialized, i.e., put into a series of cartridges.

Because the Mark IV-RV projector requires no special lighting conditions, skill, or room orientation, students are able to operate the machine after several minutes' instruction. Each cartridge will be labeled and shelved in a special reserve section either in the library or a designated learning center. As we continue in this area, critical commentaries on each film plus relevant books, articles and still-shots will be added to the resource areas.

Students will also make their own films, many of which will be subsidized by the Project. In this connection, we have purchased and made available to the cooperating schools cameras, projectors, and editing equipment. Explicitly and implicitly, the La Mancha Project is trying to provide a film study program which creates opportunities for individual development in such important areas as taste and creativity.

The relation to writing should be clear. By studying films closely, the student has another source for ideas in his written work. By having to organize, develop and translate his ideas into a finished film or report, he is going through another example of how one must discipline his imagination in order to communicate effectively with an audience. By editing his rough cut of the film, the student is learning the value of re-examining and re-working his raw material. This is not to say that film production and writing are exactly similar. It is to say that they have a lot in common. It is not to say that we are throwing out writing for filming. It is to say that by relating one to the other, the student may see more clearly the differences inherent in each. In short, teaching a person to be sensitive to one art is a beginning in teaching him to be sensitive to all arts.

Finally, there is the problem of each school's responsibility for next year. Here it is mainly a belief in one's ability to accept the challenge of change. The La Mancha teacher needs to acknowledge that somehow his success in the project will depend to a large degree upon the extent of his commitment. He must acknowledge that there is a need to close the shocking gap between the world and the classroom; he must realize that in spite of the present crisis of belief that extends from the sunken earth to the majestic heavens, an effective teacher can make a difference. He must understand that what he does with his students in relation to mass media study has a relevancy not only for writing but also for helping develop a better world. And he must believe that no matter how great the challenge, it must be met.

This then is what the La Mancha Project means for 1969-1970. It will not be any easier than in past years. The world has not changed dramatically and we be but mortal men. Nevertheless, as George Bernard Shaw once said and as Robert Kennedy reminded us anew, "Some men see the world as it is and say why; others dream of things that never were and say why not?"

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